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WHERE THE SMART SET HOLIDAY, AND WHAT THEY READ



IN THE TABLOID
THE PRIVATE LIFE OF KD LANG
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Origins of BSE traced to herds of the African plains

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Mad cow disease may have originally been brought to Britain in a shipment of infected animal remains from Africa, according to a growing body of scientific evidence.

Though this contradicts the Government's line, stringently maintained for the past decade, that the disease originated in diseased British sheep which were recycled into cattle feed, it fits a wealth of data which was not available when the diagnosis was first made in 1985.

If correct, it means that many precautions now being taken at great expense by the Government - for example, destroying sheep offal - are unnecessary, because scrapie would not pose a risk to humans or cattle. It also has implications for imports of foodstuffs from foreign countries where unusual diseases may occur, and precautions needed to stop their spread.

But John Wilesmith, the government scientist who in 1987 pinpointed infected cattle feed as the means by which BSE was spreading, said last night: "I think as events have gone on, the scrapie hypothesis still bears the test of time." He added that he was worried that any concentration on alternative sources of the epidemic could distract from introducing controls on recycling animal offal in Europe. "If they aren't, there could be more cases [of BSE]," he said.

Key in the new evidence is a written Parliamentary answer given by the Government yesterday, showing that between 1970 and 1980 the UK imported thousands of tonnes of meat and bone meal from various African countries, including South Africa, south western Africa and Botswana - which has a significant cattle industry. The imports effectively stopped afterwards.

Previously, scientists have shown that many African game animals such as cheetah, kudu, myxoma, gembok, eland and oryx can catch BSE - increasing the chance that it originated among them. Some wild animals like elk and deer develop BSE-like diseases spontaneously, but it has never been observed in cattle before the epidemic, which began in 1985.

The new hypothesis will not alter predictions for the final number of people who may die from the "new variant" of



Deadly: Thousands of tonnes of kudu and other game were imported from Africa. Photograph: Jonathan Scott/Planet Earth

Diseases that emerged from the Dark Continent

If BSE really does have its origins in Africa, then it joins a long list of dangerous diseases to have emerged from the "dark continent". Among the best-known is HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, which causes AIDS. It is widely believed to have been passed to humans by a mutation from SIV, the Simian Immunodeficiency Virus, which is found among monkeys in the central African jungles.

Green monkey disease, or Marburg disease, was identified among workers with monkeys in laboratories, but traced back to their African source. Similarly, Lassa fever, Rift Valley fever and Congo Haemorrhagic Fever all originate in Africa. While such exotic diseases can have horrifying effects, they all - with one exception - are self-limiting. Any infectious disease that kills its host rapidly will fail to spread, because the victims will not survive long enough to transmit it.

HIV is the exception, because it takes so long to destroy the body's defences that it can be passed on and infect another person while the original host is still alive. But epidemic science suggests that the combination of evolutionary pressure and advancing medical science will eventually tame even this killer from the jungle.

Other research shows that scrapie has a different molecular "fingerprint" from BSE. And separate studies have shown that cows inoculated with scrapie die of a disease like BSE - but which on detailed examination differs significantly.

That was then fed back to cattle as infected bone meal. But subsequent investigation has shown that rendering practices were unchanged from the late 1960s. Dr Wilesmith agreed: "Rendering hadn't changed - that's rubbish."

Thus the system to "amplify" BSE by recycling dead, infected carcasses was in place throughout the 1970s. Yet scrapie-infected sheep were entering the rendering system. If scrapie were the cause of the BSE epidemic, it could have started in the 1970s or early 1980s.

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Tories told new code puts Simon off limits

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The Prime Minister's office last night issued an indirect warning to William Hague that he faces the threat of libel action, if he smears Lord Simon of Highbury outside the Commons.

The Tory allegation is that Lord Simon, the former chairman of BP who has become an unpaid minister, has a conflict of interest because he holds £2m worth of BP shares while dealing with matters of interest to BP like gas liberalisation, in government.

In savage Commons exchanges over Lord Simon on Wednesday, Tony Blair told Mr Hague that if he believed his Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe had broken any rules, "perhaps he should go outside the House and repeat that allegation where it can be properly tested."

The hint that Lord Simon might bring a private action for libel was escalated into an unprecedented threat against the Tory leader last night, after the Cabinet Office published a new code of conduct for ministers.

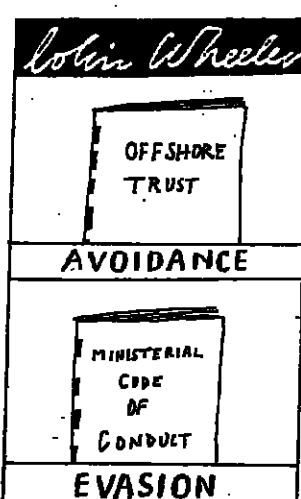
The code, revised by Mr Blair's new administration, raises the possibility of ministers taking action for defamation, and a spokesman for the Prime Minister said last night that the threat could be applied to the Tory attacks on Lord Simon.

In a letter to Mr Hague on Wednesday, passed to *The Independent* last night, Mr Blair says: "Instead of hiding behind parliamentary privilege, you should be prepared to state your claims openly and face the full consequences of doing so."

"I therefore invite you to repeat the allegation you made inside the House and set out any evidence you have to support them."

The new code of conduct repeats that ministers occasionally become engaged in legal proceedings, "primarily in their personal capacities but in circumstances which may have implications for them in their official positions." "Defamation is an example of an area where proceedings will invariably raise issues for the Minister's official as well as private position."

In all such cases, the code says, ministers should consult the Government's Law Officers



before consulting their own solicitors - and the Law Officers could take charge of proceedings from the outset. Under those circumstances, the taxpayer could be expected to underwrite the minister's costs.

That threat was greeted with some caution last night by John Redwood, shadow President of Trade and the man leading the campaign against Lord Simon's position. He told *The Independent*: "As neither the Leader of the Opposition nor I have smeared Lord Simon, all we've done is to ask a series of questions about how the Government has arranged its affairs in these important matters. I do not really see the point of the question." He said he did not

wish to make any comment on any threat being made by the Government.

Earlier in the Commons, however, Mr Redwood had pressed Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, over Lord Simon's alleged conflict of interest, questioning why the BP shares had not been sold.

Mrs Beckett said she and her ministers had answered 58 "nipping questions" from Opposition MPs about the issue.

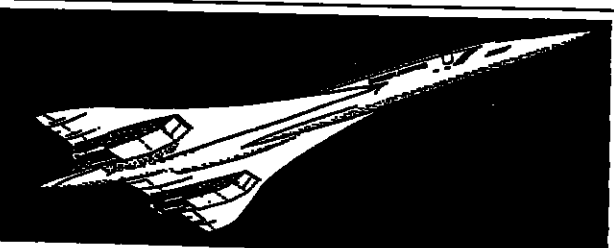
"It was plain from the day of Lord Simon's appointment," she said, "that he would not be able to deal and would not deal with matters which related directly to BP or indeed matters in which BP has a competitive advantage. That is quite clear."

She said Lord Simon could not have sold his shares because such an action would have amounted to illegal insider trading, and Whitehall sources said last night that Lord Simon had been given that advice when he took office in May.

Mr Redwood said it was curious that the government line about insider trading should have emerged for the first time this week - it had not been mentioned in any of Mrs Beckett's many replies before yesterday.

He also attacked the publication of the ministerial code of conduct as a smokescreen; an attempt to divert attention from the Government's problem.

Blair tightens grip, page 6
Leading article, page 17



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It'll be good to talk, shop, or bank with the mobile of the future

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

It's a video-camera, television, home shopping and Internet terminal, certainly not anything as ordinary as a phone. But that's what the mobile phone of the next century will be like. Barbara Roche, the trade and industry minister, predicted yesterday.

The shape of phones to come was sketched out by Ms Roche as she unveiled the third wave of licensing for parts of the radio spectrum, to create a new range of high-tech services.

Many digital mobile phones are already able to send and receive data, and at least one already has an integral keyboard and small liquid crystal screen so that users can access the In-

ternet from almost anywhere.

But the new phones, which will exploit improving digital technology and completely replace the old, analogue variety first introduced in the 1980s, are expected to offer the same sound quality as landline telephones. That should mean that the crackles and interference which still plague analogue mobile phones will be a problem of the past.

Since their introduction, mobile phones have enjoyed almost uninterrupted growth - apart from one hiccup when the previous government licensed an analogue system which could send but not receive calls.

It was a commercial failure, as consumers waited for better digital phones, which followed early in the 1990s.

A number of companies are believed to be working on systems that will beam broadcasts from mobile phones up to a receiving device, sending messages and images around the world.

The new services, called Universal Mobile Telephone Services, should also allow users access to faster e-mail, video conferencing, mobile electronic banking and databases from their mobile handset.

Ms Roche said Europe had led the world in the development of mobile phone technology and Britain was at the forefront of this research.

Licences for the new bandwaves are expected to be auctioned off before April 1999 with services coming on line in 2002.



Chatterbox: Soon it will be possible to do so much more

QUICKLY

More pressure on DPP
The Director of Public Prosecutions, Dame Barbara Mills, came under renewed pressure as judges quashed a decision not to prosecute police officers already found by a court to have tortured a suspect. Her department was said to have made a flawed decision. Pages

Aids fisherman jailed
The Government is considering making it an offence intentionally to infect another person with a disease. The announcement came on the day fisherman Pavlos Georgiou was jailed by a Cypriot court for 15 months for knowingly infecting his British lover, Janette Pink, with the Aids virus. Page 10

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significant shorts

Housewife charged with indecent assault on boy

Tracey Whalin, a 33-year-old housewife, appeared in court yesterday accused of abducting a child and of indecently assaulting him.

The 33-year-old housewife, of Bilborough, Nottingham, was accused of indecently assaulting a male person under 16 between 1 April 1996 and 15 July 1997. A further charge read out at Nottingham magistrates' court alleged she took a child aged under 16 from the lawful control of his guardian on 14 July this year.

Peter Nuthall, the stipendiary magistrate, granted bail to Ms Whalin, who was brought back from Florida on Wednesday, on condition she does not contact the child involved in the proceedings or his family, either by phone, letter or by visits.

She must live at a hostel, which was not named in court, and was told she cannot enter Nottinghamshire except to answer her bail on 25 September. A further bail condition is that Ms Whalin, who has surrendered her passport to police, does not apply for another passport.

EU gives £10m to urban blackspots

A £10m grant for urban blackspots in Brighton, Bristol, Coventry and Merseyside was announced yesterday by the European Union Commission.

The funds will help thousands of people living in areas plagued by severe unemployment, poverty, crime, low levels of education, poor housing and inadequate social and community facilities. Brighton, Bristol and Coventry will each get £3m of EU cash, with public and private funds boosting the total package to £20m. Merseyside, which has already received nearly £12m in EU grants for deprived areas, gets another £1.5m. The grant aims to regenerate disadvantaged areas by making them safer and more pleasant places to live and work, boosting business confidence and setting up job-creation schemes.

Marilyn: What a doll!



icons. The doll can be dressed in three of Monroe's most glamorous gowns, including those which helped make her famous in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *The Seven Year Itch* . Barbie Marilyn will be available in shops from September, price £55.

Mother wins right to name son

A legal battle between the unmarried parents of a 16-month-old boy, over whose surname he should be given, ended yesterday in victory for the mother.

The boy, Alexander, was born in March last year just days before his parents, Dawn Wearmouth and Mark Dawson, from Somerset, separated. His mother registered the birth in her ex-husband Tony's name, Wearmouth, which she and her two children from the marriage still use. But Mr Dawson argued that, although Alexander lived with his mother, the child should take his father's name rather than that of a man to whom he was not related. He launched legal proceedings and obtained a ruling in his favour at Tarrant County Court in January. Yesterday the Court of Appeal allowed a challenge by the mother, ruling that the choice of her own name was "perfectly logical and natural".

Verdict quashed on child's death

The family of a 23-month-old boy who died during surgery after being shuttled between four hospitals in eight hours yesterday succeeded in their bid to quash an inquest jury's verdict that he died from "natural causes".

But Mr Justice Kay, at the High Court, refused to substitute a finding of death by accident/misadventure, or to remit the case for a fresh inquest. There was an outcry when the jury returned the 8-1 majority verdict on Robert Benton, who died in the Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham, in June 1995 after falling ill with a chest infection, in April last year. Lawyers for his mother, Julie Benton, 24, and his father, Timothy Daves, 33, from Rowley Regis, Warwick, West Midlands, argued that there had been a misdiagnosis during emergency treatment, and the jury should have been allowed to consider a verdict of misadventure or lack of care.

MPs lose bid to tax parking

Ministers have rejected a proposal from MPs for a tax on car parking at out-of-town shopping and leisure centres. Responding to an Environment Committee report on the threats that out of town development poses to existing city and town centres, the Department of the Environment said it wanted to continue with the last Government's policies, which make it much harder for developers to get permission to develop supermarkets and malls on greenfield sites than was the case in the Eighties. Nicholas Schoon

Police launch drug-driving survey

The first survey of drug-driving in the UK is to be launched today by a Scottish police force. It is hoped that the study, to be carried out in the Strathclyde police force area, will result in improved methods of roadside detection. Drivers pulled in will be asked a series of questions and to perform various exercises but no charges will be pressed. A police spokesman said: "The hope is that by upgrading the ability of police officers to spot the tell-tale signs, such as eye reflex movements, they will be able to detect offenders more readily."

Normal weather resumes

While large parts of Europe are flooded, the weather in England and Wales is back to normal. Yesterday the Met Office said the July just ended had had 50 mm of rain - slightly less than the month's long-term average. Temperature and hours of sunshine were both slightly above average. Nicholas Schoon

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people



Anti-hero: Keith Flint and his band have set out to alienate fans (Photograph: Peter Macdonald)

The Prodigy: How we plan to destroy ourselves

Would-be teenage rock stars, idly strumming guitars in bedrooms across the land, might dream of becoming bigger stars than Oasis, but The Prodigy are so afraid of overtaking the boys from Manchester that they plan to self-destruct.

The band are currently at the top of the album charts around the world, but band-member Liam Howlett said yesterday he had deliberately set out to destroy their popularity with their new single, the provocatively titled *Smack My Bitch Up*, and a quote from Herman Goering on the album sleeve.

The album, *The Fat of the Land*, has hit number one in 22 countries - including the US where it knocked the ubiquitous Spice Girls off the top - and is widely tipped to win the prestigious Mercury Music Prize, dubbed the Booker of the music industry. Indeed, the Essex band are at the cutting edge of the wave of British electronic music that is being eagerly hoovered up by American youngsters.

Keith Flint, the frontman, who sports a spiky fluorescent green hairdo, is a teenage favourite because his aggressive stage persona means he is "hated by all parents". Howlett, the musician behind the band's furious sound, admitted the single would be "self-destructive". But said he wanted to discourage casual fans because he was terrified that The Prodigy would overtake Oasis in the popularity stakes.

"My dad likes Oasis. We have to be something that people dislike," he told *Select* magazine yesterday.

"I'm not doing another album. There isn't another Prodigy album. I went through so much pressure. I don't want to go through that again."

In the same article, Flint said he was worried about his colleague's reluctance to reveal in the limelight. "If he turned round and said, 'There's no more Prodigy, there's no more touring, that would be scary, because what am I going to do then?' he said."

"It's not like 'I'll go and get another job.' Despite the inevitable controversy which will follow *Smack My Bitch Up*, Howlett insisted it did not advocate beating up women.

"It's an answer to the people who thought that *Freestarter* [the band's first British No 1] was about starting fires. They've got to get the irony in the songs," he said.

The Goering quote ("Would you rather have butter than guns?") was "obviously not a Nazi thing," he said, because the Prodigy has two black members, Maxim and Leeroy.

Those of a cynical disposition would view these remarks as an attempt to create publicity and stir up demand for the "last ever" album.

But a spokesman for the Prodigy's record label, Beggar's Banquet, said: "If you knew Liam you would know that's not the case."

"He's always been anxious to the point of paranoia about the band being overexposed."

Kate Watson-Smyth

US astronaut told she is too short for space

Pity poor Wendy Lawrence. Having studied and trained for most of her 38-year life to be an astronaut, she failed at the last hurdle - on a technicality. At 5ft 3in, she was judged too short.

Just days before Ms Lawrence, an American, was due to blast off for the crippled space station *Mir* along with two Russian astronauts, she was stood down because of her height. She has been replaced by the rather taller David Wolf.

The decision came so late that Ms Lawrence had already given a press conference, partly in Russian, in which she had expressed her "big desire" to go to space, her all-American confidence in her ability to discharge her responsibilities, the feasibility of the salvage operation that she and the crew were to perform on *Mir*, and in the bright future for Russian-American co-operation in space.

It was only hours later that NASA decreed that she would have to be replaced.

Because of the precarious state of *Mir*, all three astronauts in the new crew will have to be prepared to walk in space to repair the *Spectr* module.

Usually only two of the three crew members need to be equipped for space-walking. *Mir* was built by the Russians, to Russian specifications, and anyone who steps or floats outside has to wear a Russian "Orlan" spacesuit that will connect with the *Mir* technology.



Unfortunately for Ms Lawrence, Russian spacesuits come in a one-size-fits-all (Russians). She would have been floating inside the suit before she even stepped outside. So she had to cede her place.

That, at least, is the story told by the Americans. They said it was a Russian decision; but the Russians seemed confused last night, and claimed they hadn't been told. There was a lingering suspicion that Ms Lawrence was stood down from a prospectively dangerous journey for some other reason.

Ms Lawrence has had bad luck with *Mir*. She was initially rejected for the programme and, at her press conference, she managed to knock the model of *Mir* off the table - not the best omen.

Mary Dejevsky, Washington

Baby makes medical history after operation

A baby born safely after he was diagnosed with a brain haemorrhage while still in the womb has made medical history by being the first child to survive such a condition.

Dylan Harris, described by his parents, David and Vickie, as a "little fighter" underwent brain surgery when he was three-days-old after a routine scan carried out at Arrowe Park Hospital, Wirral showed he had a rare subdural haemorrhage - a blood clot between the brain and skull.

Dylan's diagnosis in the womb, believed to be the earliest recorded, enabled doctors to order a rare magnetic resonance imaging scan which confirmed the clot. Ross Welch, consultant obstetrician, said he had consulted colleagues in London and abroad after spotting the rare clot on the scan.

"There was no doubt in my mind that it was a clot, but it was very difficult to know the best treatment," he said.

Dylan, whose head had swelled dangerously from 8cm to 11cm, was delivered by Caesarean section at 34 weeks and prepared for emergency surgery.

"The worst part was when I had to get him baptised the night before his operation, because we were told he might not pull through," said Mr Harris.

Neurosurgeon Paul May, of Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool, performed the life-saving craniotomy to drain the clot from Dylan's brain.

Glenda Cooper

briefing

SOCIETY

Big increase in number of teenage drug deaths

A dramatic rise in deaths among teenage drug abusers is reported by doctors today. Between 1985 and 1995, overall drug deaths among youngsters aged 15 to 19 increased by 8 per cent a year, their research showed. During this period, 436 teenagers died accidentally from drug poisoning - 303 of them male and 133 female.

The biggest killers were opiates, like heroin, which accounted for 21 per cent of the deaths. Deaths from these drugs soared by an average 27 per cent a year during the 11-year period.

Between 1985 and 1989, 17 teenagers died from taking opiates and related narcotics. In the four years between 1991 and 1995, this had risen to 67.

Death rates from other mind-altering drugs, such as ecstasy, increased by 23 per cent a year between 1985 and 1995. From 1985 to 1989 there were eight deaths in this category, but from 1991 to 1995 there were 32.

The figures, published in the *British Medical Journal*, emerged from a study led by Dr Ian Roberts from the Institute of Child Health, London. The researchers examined records of deaths obtained from the Office for National Statistics. Glenda Cooper

ALCOHOL

Cut your drinking - keep a diary

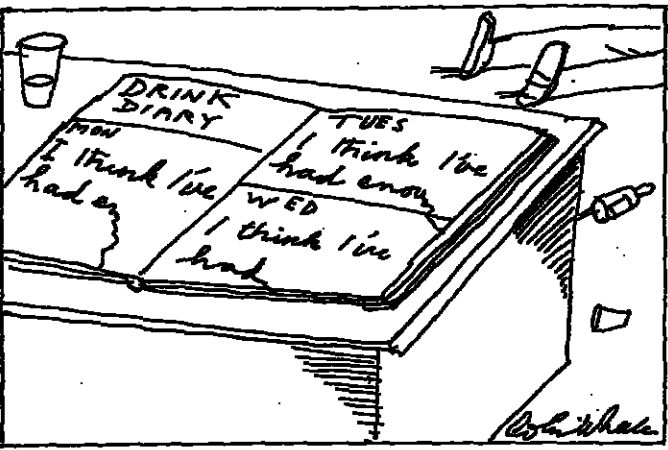
People who fear they may be drinking too much should avoid buying rounds in the pub and keep a diary to record their weekly alcohol intake, a new guide advises today.

More than one in 20 people in England are "problem drinkers" - regularly drinking more than the recommended amount, binge-drinking at the weekend or drinking to prevent withdrawal symptoms, according to the Health Education Authority and Alcohol Concern.

To help them cut down, the partnership has launched a guide called *Say When - How Much Is Too Much?* which spells out the health, social and financial benefits of drinking less, and offers 10 practical tips on tackling the problem.

They include setting a limit and keeping to it by keeping a drink diary, not reaching for the bottle to help you relax, skipping rounds in the pub and buying half pints instead of pints.

According to the organisations, 2.68 million people in England could be putting their health at risk, as well as getting into financial or emotional difficulties, by drinking too much.



HEALTH

Insulin risk to unborn babies

Pregnant women with insulin-dependent diabetes have a tenfold increased risk of bearing children with congenital abnormalities, says a clinical study published today. Their babies are also five times more likely than normal to be stillborn, according to the research.

Doctors from Liverpool University examined data on 462 pregnancies in 355 women with insulin-dependent diabetes (IDD) between 1990 and 1994.

The women were from 10 maternity units in Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside, which had no regional guidelines for the management of pregnancy in diabetic women.

Of the pregnancies, 78 (17 per cent) aborted spontaneously, nine (2 per cent) resulted in stillbirth, and 24 (5 per cent) were terminated. Of the terminations, nine were for congenital malformation.

Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, the authors said the problems could be reduced by good management of blood sugar levels before and at the time of conception. They added: "The challenge remains to implement this on a population basis."

The researchers, led by Dr Gillian Hawthorne from Hartlepool General Hospital, wrote: "Though two thirds of the pregnancies were planned by the mother, most women had not established good diabetic control before conception."

"Preconception care reduces major congenital malformations and the spontaneous abortion rate."

TRANSPORT

Driving a company car? Pull over ...

More than half of company car drivers are putting lives at risk by not taking essential breaks on long journeys, a survey claims. Nearly two in three also fail to check tyre pressures and 10 per cent never check oil levels, the survey from vehicle management company Lease Plan also found.

It added that 52 per cent of company car drivers covering long distances on a regular basis did not stop for breaks as they should do every two hours.

"Statistics show that 25 per cent of all motorway accidents are fatigue-related, showing that it is critical for even the most experienced drivers to stop for a break during long journeys," said Lease Plan commercial director Steve Dunn.

"Company car drivers are typically high mileage drivers and consequently more likely to be involved in an accident. Therefore, attention to safety and maintenance is absolutely necessary."

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Summertime and the living gets easier as politicians take time out

Kim Sengupta and Louise Hancock

It's end of term time at Westminster, and MPs – no doubt exhausted by the gruelling labours of the last few months – are heading off on holiday to recharge their batteries for the next session.

As they gather up their beach towels and sun block, their Michelin guides and Italian and French phrasebooks, new Labour MPs can jet off relaxed in the knowledge that the immediate future belongs to them. The Tories know that the break will be followed by a long struggle to find a way out of the political wilderness.

The Prime Minister and his family are off tomorrow for a 10-day break at the villa of the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, in San Gimignano, Tuscany, where they went last year. The 10-acre estate, worth £3m, is said to provide just the right amount of luxury without being vulgar. The facilities include a 45ft swimming pool and a floodlit tennis court.

Also going to Tuscany is the employment minister, Andrew Smith, while the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, is already in northern Italy. And it is not just British social democrats who are tempted by Chianti: Lionel Jospin, who led the Centre-Left to power in France after Mr Blair's due to stay in Siena.

Bucking the trend is Employment Secretary David Blunkett, who will be holidaying at his usual venue, northern Majorca – held by those in the know to be the real Majorca. "The problem with Tuscany," Mr Blunkett declared, "is that you keep meeting ministers." One he may not be able to avoid, however, is his colleague Gavin Strang, the transport minister, who is also Majorca bound.

John Prescott, however, is having no truck with foreign jaunts. A spokesman for the Deputy Prime Minister said: "He has no plans to be out of the country in August and he will keep working."

Also staying in Britain is Frank Dobson.

Where they go

the Health Secretary, who is taking a cottage holiday in Northern England, and the Secretary of State for Wales, Ron Davies, who will be loyal to the principality and take his vacation there. And after a burst of statesmanship abroad, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook says he is happy to relax in the New Forest in Hampshire.

France is where Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, will be taking his break, as will Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, who will be on a caravan trip with husband Leo.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is going to Cape Cod in Massachusetts. But will he be taking his fiancée Sarah Macaulay? The response from spokesman Charles Whelan was: "None of your business."

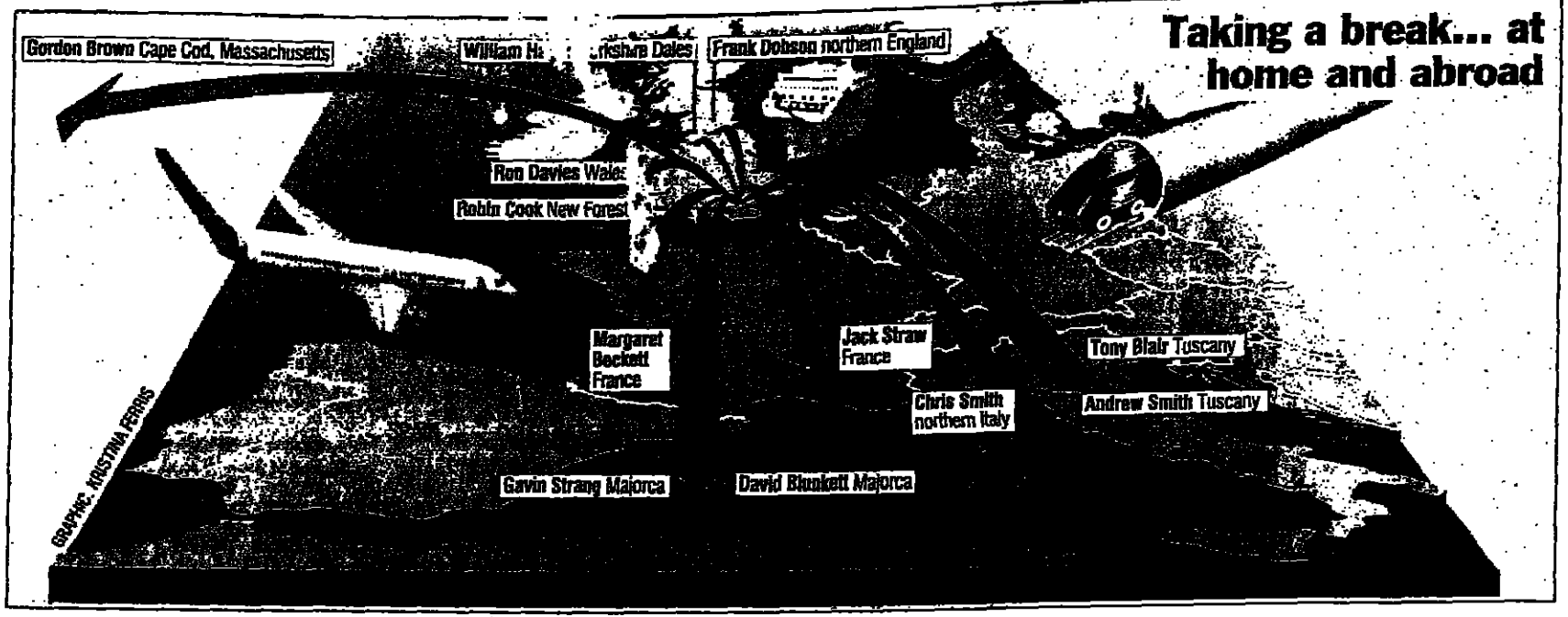
New Conservative leader William Hague was not so coy. His fiancée Fiona Jenkins will be most definitely at his side when he goes walking in the Yorkshire Dales before a trip to the US.

"Then he will be on a tour of the country to spread his message of reform in the party," said a Central Office spokesman.

Peter Lilley, who lost out in the leadership contest to Mr Hague will be joining his wife at their home in France where she spends much of her time. The couple will then drive down to "somewhere in the centre of Italy".

The former agriculture minister Douglas Hogg will be trying to forget the savaging he took over his handling of the BSE crisis by climbing at the Aletsch Glacier in the Alps. He says he has set a target of scaling five 4,000 metre peaks.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, will be visiting his new grandson in Sens, near Auxerre, before going on to the family cottage in Burgundy for three weeks. A party spokesman said: "He was a man of action once, of course; now he prefers a nice, quiet, normal vacation."



Taking a break... at home and abroad



Time out: Tony Blair (left), relaxing in Italy with two of his three children; the Conservative leader, William Hague, will this year be heading to the Yorkshire Dales and then to the United States

The rich and famous who jet off to sunnier climes

Many of the rich and famous prefer to take their holiday later in the year, particularly in winter, when the rest are coping with the British weather.

Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall are expected to be dropping in and out of Martinique and St Lucia later in the year.

Dame Judi Dench has already been to Barbados with her family and are expected to return their sometime later this year. Fellow thespian Michael Palin is in central France for a week.

Helena Kennedy, QC, one of the stars of the criminal bar, and friend of the Blairs has gone on a tour of the US East Coast with her family. While the writer and broadcaster Henry Kelly is in Tuscany and Umbria with his family for two weeks.

Oasis are promoting their latest single, and are said to be too busy to go on holiday. They are expected to take a break in the sun after finishing gigs in September. Their Britpop rivals, Blur, are also keen to



Caribbean-bound: Mick Jagger

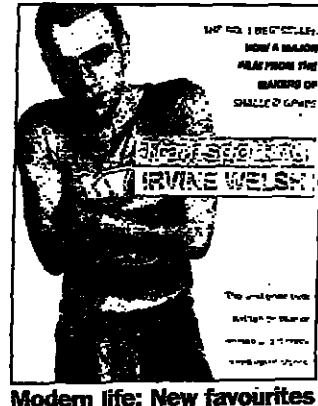


Off to Barbados: Dame Judi Dench

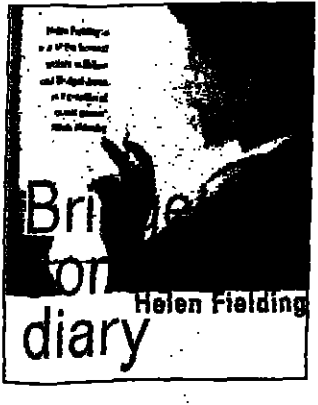
state that they too are so busy that they cannot take a break. Jon Bon Jovi, the former "wild child of rock" says he is content to have a brief break with his family in New Jersey in between filming.

Kim Sengupta and Louise Hancock

Trainspotting and singles sex instead of Trollope



Modern life: New favourites reflect changes in the House



Bridget Jones's diary

Louise Jury

They choose less Trollope, more Irvine Welsh. The reading habits of the new crop of MPs say as much about the changed face of the Commons as any parliamentary profile.

Welsh's seedy tale of Scottish drug life, *Trainspotting*, is one of the favourite books among the new generation.

While Margaret Atwood did not even make it into the list last year, her novel *Alias Grace* is a winner this time. And the popularity of *The Independent's* own Bridget Jones – as told in the book form of her diary – may point to the relative youth of the new Westminster intake.

Dillon's Bookstore wrote to all 659 MPs and 160 replied. "Clearly this is a House that's committed to books and to reading," said Findlay Caldwell, the store's marketing director.

Mentions of Williams Burroughs, Will Self and even the Fulham football club 1996/7 yearbook mark a radical departure, although the Bible remains the best book ever by an

What they read

even greater margin. As for holiday reading, a mixed literary delight of Bill Bryson's *Notes From A Small Island*, Edward Rutherfurd's *London*, Eric Hobsbawm and books by Ken Follet will be in suitcases across the country as the Commons breaks for the summer.

Alan Clark, Kensington and Chelsea's Tory MP, has just started Max Egremond's biography of Edward Spears. "It's a marvellous book, very pleasing and very vividly written." He never reads novels and plans to take James Lees-Milne's new volume of diaries on holiday.

Barbara Follett, credited with Labour's sartorial makeover, will read the first draft of *Out of the Mouth of the Dragon*, the new novel by her husband, Ken. Gary Streeter, Tory spokesman on European affairs, is taking his new post seriously. He has "various books on the European Union" to tackle. And Ben Bradshaw, the new MP for Exeter, intends to track down

a book on the American Civil War whose title eludes him. "I haven't had any time to think of any other reading – I've been so busy," he said.

Dr Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, is a Bridget Jones fan. "It's just so funny and all my friends relate to it." Keith Vaz, Labour MP for Leicester East, plans to read *Primary Colors*, the controversial novel of sex and politics broadly based on President Clinton's election campaign.

Meanwhile, Sir Richard Body, the man synonymous with "the flapping of white coats" in John Major's phrase, will be writing a book of his own – on England and Englishness. So his holiday reading will comprise a few histories of the nation.

Yet the lists would be quite different if the MPs took any notice of their friends. Asked what they have been urged to read and not got round to yet, Will Hutton's economic treatise, *The State We're In*, came top of the list. And you thought it was required new Labour reading ...

For those waiting at departure gates, expect a long(ish) delay

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

How they get there

MPs who choose to fly to their holiday destinations on scheduled British airlines would do well to be prepared to get there late: up to seven out of ten planes operated by British airlines do not leave on time on some busy international routes.

With 16 million flights out of the country this summer, many airlines are keen to trumpet punctual routes. In a recent survey of travellers, an airline's reputation for punctuality ranked third behind "convenient timetables and safety" as reasons for booking with a carrier.

Despite this, only 37 per cent of British Airways' Gatwick to Miami flights ran to time, while on the flag-carrier's lucrative Heathrow to Los Angeles service more than 10 per cent of planes left late.

Virgin's performance was even worse on one high profile routes. Its Heathrow to

San Francisco service – £875 return – suffered an average delay of 58 minutes in March. The figures are revealed in a survey by *Business Traveller* of scheduled carriers last March, the latest figures available.

Virgin said its problems were caused by a shortage of planes. "We had a problem earlier this year because we were expecting additional aircraft but they did not arrive until this May," said a spokesman. The airline said that in March only 30 per cent of planes on London to San Francisco flew on time – that figure was now 56 per cent "and rising".

Not all the news was bad. BA did run the third most punctual route from Britain. Its Heathrow to Pisa service – the gateway to Tuscany – only incurred an average delay of three minutes. The airline said that there was room for improvement and blamed "a

variety of reasons including late connecting passengers, document queries, overbooking and air traffic control problems" for its poor performance.

Price is no guarantee of punctuality. Many low cost airlines can match the performance of more expensive carriers. The study points out on services to Glasgow, Easyjet from Luton is "nearly a match for British Midland" out of Heathrow.

In general, passengers should expect minimal delays to or from Northern Europe. Although no government admits that planes are in danger, Europe's busy skies are growing more congested and there is more pressure on air traffic controllers to deal with the burgeoning number of flights.

The Air Transport Users Council, the passenger watchdog, recently compiled a punctuality league for charter airlines and is now in talks with the Civil Aviation Authority, the air regulator, to produce a similar table ranking scheduled carriers.

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All-out strike threatened for rail network

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

Tony Blair faces the prospect of a nationwide rail strike in the run-up to the Labour Party conference in October, which threatens to cause the most serious disruption to commuters since the signalworkers' dispute in 1994.

Leaders of the biggest rail union yesterday called strike ballots among 6,000 guards at 20 train operating companies covering around 85 per cent of the network.

Leaders of the RMT union are angry over proposals which will allegedly "downgrade" the job of guard to "salesperson" who will be given a minimal degree of technical training.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the union, argued that the companies wanted to appoint guards for their "looks" and ability to sell to passengers rather than their operational and safety knowledge. "We will end up with the best looking staff in the world and one of the least safe railways," he said.

In the wake of the plan by the

Great Eastern to employ commuters as part-time guards, the RMT believes its campaign of action would attract substantial public support.

Only five out of the 25 train operating companies throughout Britain are exempt from the strike ballots. The RMT has elicited guarantees over safety from North London Railways and the union has agreed driver-only operation with four others: Thameslink, the Chiltern Line, West Anglia Great Northern and the Island Line on the Isle of Wight.

Elsewhere, however, the union believes any action would be highly disruptive because more than nine out of ten guards are RMT members. The union is due over the next 10 days to decide on the exact nature of the action, but it is likely to be in the form of 24-hour stoppages.

Last April, the union sought assurances from the train operators that they would not dilute safety standards in the drive for profitability. Only North London Railways gave a reply which satisfied the union.

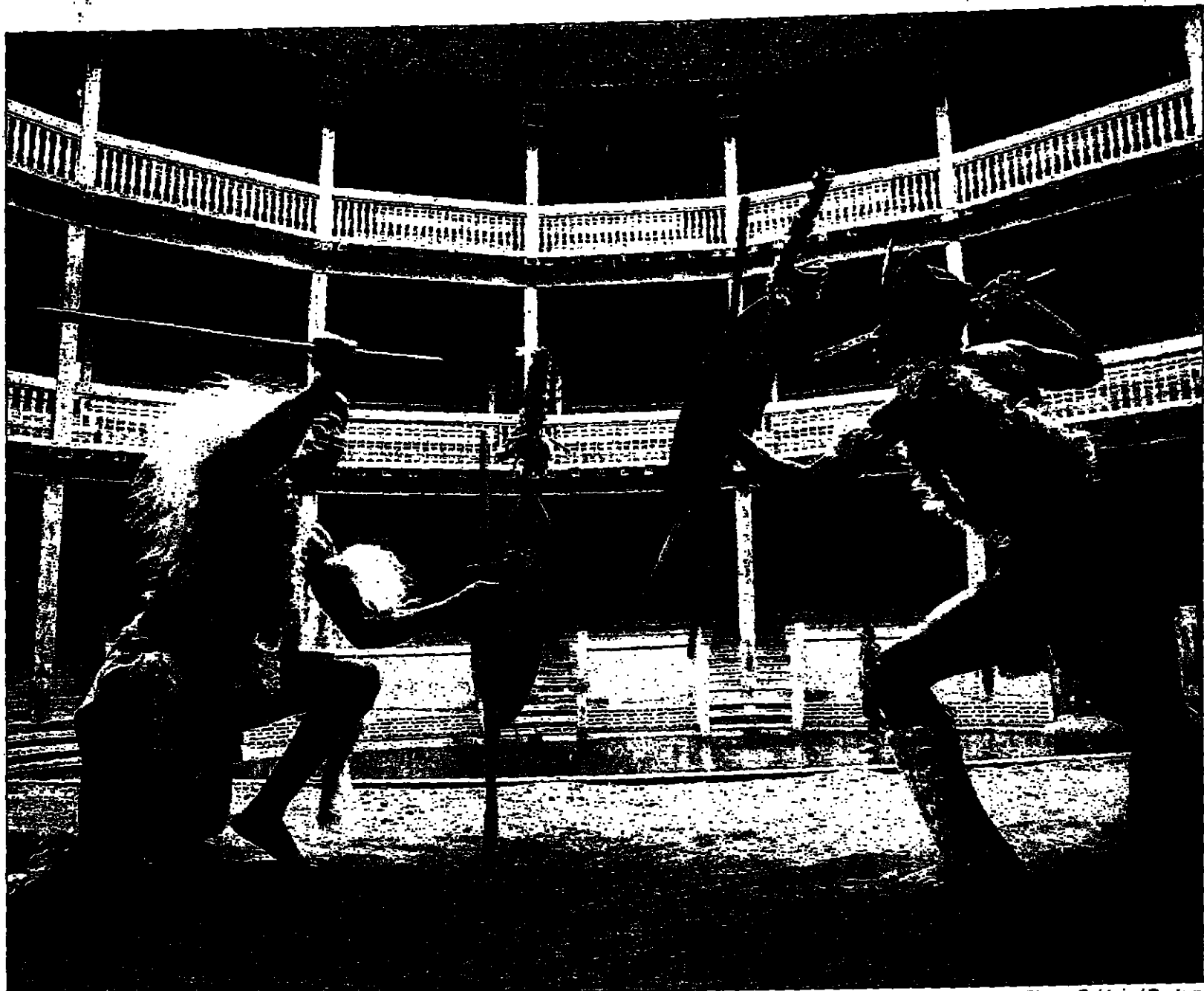
The companies have put forward a range of proposals which would result in some of the safety responsibilities being transferred from the guard to the driver or to an unspecified "competent person", said the RMT leader.

The strike ballots close on 2 September and in the absence of a settlement, the action would begin on 10 or 11 September, during the annual TUC Congress and a fortnight before the Labour conference.

A spokesman for the Association of Train Operating Companies said a group of experts convened by Railtrack was preparing to make some amendments to the legally-backed railway rule book to ensure an even safer industry.

A spokesman for Railtrack, which is responsible for the contents of the rule book, said: "We are trying to simplify the arrangements so that the guard is free to undertake his or her safety responsibilities."

Talks will be held to avert 24-hour strikes by drivers at Regional Railways North East in protest at working hours.



South African actors from the production of 'Umbatha: the Zulu Macbeth' rehearsing at the Globe in London yesterday Photograph: Shawn Baldwin / Reuters

Spanish fishing court victory

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Spanish owners of more than 100 fishing vessels got the go-ahead yesterday to claim millions of pounds in compensation for being illegally barred from "quota hopping".

Three judges ruled in the High Court that the UK's breaches of European law, which prevented the Spanish operators fishing against the UK quota, were sufficiently serious to give rise to liability for damages. The UK taxpayer will have to pick up the bill.

But the judges refused to allow a claim for punitive damages, rejecting the accusation that the former Conservative government had acted in bad faith or arbitrarily when drawing up restrictions on British registrations of Spanish vessels in the

1988 Merchant Shipping Act.

In a landmark case brought by one of the operators, Factorama Limited, in 1992, the European Court of Justice ruled that the nationality conditions in the Act were inconsistent with EU treaty obligations on free movement of labour and capital. A total of 97 owners and managers of 107 vessels stand to gain from yesterday's ruling. Patrick Stewart, secretary of the Clyde Fishermen's Association, blamed the incompetence of the previous government but said the agreement secured by Labour at the Amsterdam summit would not help the situation. He predicted that there would be an increase in quota-hopping.

A Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food spokesman said officials would study the judgment carefully before deciding whether to appeal.

DAILY POEM

Braveheart

By John Davies

Stranded in middle age,
he couldn't decide,
Doug from Carolina,
of Welsh and Scots ancestry,
which to follow up.
Till he watched Hollywood's
pipe fantasia, *Braveheart*.
No contest. So he signed
for a tartan weekend
then brought the kilt.
And modelled it for me.

Why should I smile?
Not just a country big enough
to get lost in, small ones
dram fallback positions.
Rumours of dark
Celtic roots in Iberia
feed bright thoughts.
Doug might know where
the Welsh-Spanish hang out
or where (I have the legs)
I'd find a bullfighter's cape.

John Davies, who teaches in Denbighshire but has also worked in Washington, Michigan and Utah, connects the mining landscapes of Wales and the American West in his collection *Diri Roads*, from which this poem comes. *Diri Roads* is published (price £6.95) by Seren at First Floor, 2 Wyndham Street, Bridgend, CF31 1EF.

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Pressure mounts on beleaguered DPP

Mills rebuked for third time in a week over failure to bring charges against police

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The Director of Public Prosecutions came under renewed pressure yesterday as judges quashed a decision not to prosecute police officers already found by a court to have tortured a suspect.

It was the third judicial review case within a week in which the DPP, Dame Barbara Mills, and the Crown Prosecution Service, have been found to have mishandled cases of death or ill-treatment in custody.

Lord Justice Rose and Mr Justice Jowitt said Dame Barbara's department had made a "flawed" decision not to prosecute four former members of the now disbanded West Midlands Serious Crime Squad.

The case was brought by Derek Treadaway, whom another judge, Mr Justice McKinnon, had already awarded £50,000 in damages in a civil claim for battery. Mr Justice McKinnon found "on a high degree of probability" that officers had obtained a confession to robbery by torturing through suffocating him with plastic bags.



Under fire: Dame Barbara Mills, whose department's decision not to bring charges against four policemen who tortured a suspect was found to be flawed Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

The DPP and CPS must now reconsider whether to prosecute the four officers - Det Supt John Brown, Det Insp Timothy Russell, Det Sgt Alan Pickering and Det Insp James Price. If the

rethink leads to a prosecution, it will be the first time that any officer from the discredited squad has faced charges in the criminal courts.

The CPS decided in August

1995 that there was insufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. The decision was taken by a senior legal assistant, Martin Maryn-Woodnutt, who has since re-

tired. He had concluded: "I do not think that the principal allegation that Treadaway was tortured has any substantial support, there is no medical evidence ... in my view he was ex-

tremely lucky to succeed in the civil claim. The evidence obviously came across in his favour, but on a much lower standard than we would require."

That approach was rejected

conclusions "demonstrate, repeatedly, a flawed approach", and a breach of the Code of Practice for Crown Prosecutors. "There was medical evidence ... Mr Justice McKinnon's conclusions were manifestly not reached on a 'much lower standard' of proof," they said.

Mr Maryn-Woodnutt's decision was confirmed last year by Brandon Longden, a solicitor in the Central Casework Division, and Graham Martin, an Assistant Chief Crown Prosecutor, who was also involved in the two death-in-custody cases that Dame Barbara conceded last week. The judges ruled that the later decision relied significantly on the earlier one, and was equally flawed.

A CPS spokeswoman said: "We are obviously concerned that there seems to be a flaw in the decision-making process and we will reconsider this decision."

Raju Bhatt, Mr Treadaway's solicitor, said: "In Mr Treadaway's case, as in the case of Lapite and O'Brien last week, the decision makers have appeared intent on seeking excuses not to prosecute."

"It is now imperative that Judge Butler's inquiry into that decision-making process should examine the handling of all complaints against police as well as deaths in police and prison custody."

"Ultimately, what is in issue is the absence of will to bring police officers to account to the rule of law - an absence of will at every level within the police complaints process."

Straw orders Lawrence inquiry

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

The inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, announced yesterday, will have wide-ranging implications for how the police and courts deal with racially motivated crime.

The inquiry will be given powers last used in Lord Scarman's 1981 inquiry into the Brixton riots. It will examine the events surrounding the stabbing of the 18-year-old student while he was waiting for a bus in Eltham, south-east London, in 1993.

In a surprise move, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said

the inquiry team will also identify what lessons can be learned for the investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crime. Such an inquiry, which will question the role of the police, Crown Prosecution Service, and courts, was not expected.

Mr Lawrence's father Neville welcomed the announcement as a "step in the right direction". Headed by the former High Court judge Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, the inquiry has been given the power to summon any person or obtain any documents. Refusal to testify would be contempt of court.

The inquiry is expected to last three to six months and should begin in October, when an ongoing investigation by Kent police, supervised by the Police Complaints Authority, into the handling of the case by the Metropolitan police is completed.

The inquiry is expected to examine the role of the police after the CPS discontinued a prosecution for lack of evidence, and a private prosecution collapsed because of insufficient evidence and the inadmissibility of the evidence of a key witness.

Last February, an inquest jury returned a verdict that Stephen had been unlawfully killed in an unprovoked racist attack by five white youths. After the inquest ruling, the *Daily Mail* named the five young men as Stephen's killers, challenging them to sue for libel if the paper was wrong.

In March, the Lawrence family made an official complaint over the way police investigated the murder, claiming they did not take it seriously. Neville Lawrence said yesterday: "We are happy with what we have got today, but we have waited four years for this."

Imran Khan, the Lawrence family solicitor, said: "Had the police in this case investigated as they should have done, we would not have needed to be sitting here and we would not have had to have knocked on the Home Secretary's door in order to have a public inquiry."

Sir Paul Condon, the Com-

missioner of the Metropolitan Police and offered his full support to the inquiry.

Other members of the inquiry team are: Thomas Cook, formerly deputy chief constable of West Yorkshire; the Rt Rev John Sentamu, Bishop of Stepney; and Dr Richard Stone, chairman of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality.

Mr Straw said: "I believe this inquiry ... will allow the concerns of the Lawrence family and others to be fully addressed and will identify the lessons to be learned from this tragic case, which will be relevant to the future handling of racially motivated crimes by the criminal justice system."

Douglas family denied inquest

The family of Wayne Douglas, a burglary suspect whose death in police custody triggered a riot, failed in a High Court bid yesterday to win a fresh inquest.

A judge ruled that, even though the inquest jury had not been properly directed by the coroner when it returned an accidental death verdict, the same verdict would have been reached if the directions had been given correctly.

The judge's decision was a blow to Lisa Douglas-Williams, sister of the dead man. She led the fight to quash the jury's verdict to one majority verdict in December last year, that the 25-year-old unemployed man died accidentally following his arrest by police in a late-night chase through the back streets of Brixton, south London.

Douglas was held face down with hands cuffed behind his back on four separate occasions on the night of his arrest for alleged aggravated burglary.

He was suspected of robbing a young couple at knifepoint in their home and was arrested after being cornered in a children's playground.

Douglas's death in December 1995 led to widespread riots in Brixton which caused damage costing more than £1m.

Douglas's family accused coroner Sir Montague Levine of misdirecting the jury at Southwark, south London, and failing to give a proper explanation of the law, which could have led to a verdict of unlawful killing.

Lawyers argued such a verdict could have been returned on the basis that the police officers involved in the arrest were guilty of manslaughter through committing an unlawful act or through gross negligence.

Mr Justice Laws agreed the coroner's summing up had been "unclear" and the jury not properly directed as to a possible verdict of unlawful killing.

Rejecting the request for a fresh hearing, the judge said that, on analysis, "there was not in my judgment evidence upon which a properly directed jury could have found 'unlawful act' manslaughter. As regards gross negligence ... the evidence was at very best extremely tenuous."

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politics

Number 10 tightens grip on ministers

Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

An iron New Labour discipline is imposed on Ministers by Number 10 in new Whitehall rules published last night.

The old *Questions of Procedure for Ministers* published by John Major were relatively slack in the control they exerted over Ministers in their relationship with the media.

Tony Blair's office last night

poured scorn on the amateurish nature of the Conservative Government's disciplinary machinery. Number 10, it was explained, was acting with the professionalism that should be expected of the New Labour machine.

Under the old rules, for example, it was suggested that when Ministers were invited "by the broadcasting authorities" to give an interview on radio or television, "in the interest of effective co-ordination of the

presentation of Government policies, Ministers should ensure that No 10 Press Office is informed of their intentions."

"This will enable them to use broadcasting opportunities to best advantage and to avoid duplication with colleagues."

The gentle and rather diffident nature of that suggestion has now been replaced by a blanket demand that includes all contacts between Ministers and all media contacts, including newspaper reporters - and all

events, including lunch.

The new *Ministerial Code: A Code of Conduct and Guidance on Procedures for Ministers* says: "In order to ensure effective presentation of Government policy, all major interviews and media appearances, both print and broadcast, should be agreed with the No 10 Press office before any commitments are entered into."

"The policy content of all major speeches, press releases and

new policy initiatives should be cleared in good time with the No 10 Private Office [of the Prime Minister]; the timing and form of announcements should be cleared with the No 10 Press Office."

The new code then adds, for good measure: "Each department should keep a record of media contacts by both Ministers and officials."

A Downing Street spokesman said last night that if a Minister was dealing with

a trivial issue, like widgets, then it might not be necessary to refer the matter to No 10.

But if anything was going to appear in a national newspaper, then it should automatically be referred to Alistair Campbell, the Prime Minister's Press Secretary, or his staff, for clearance.

There were a number of other changes made in the rules, which have been extensively re-written - making comparison difficult - but adjustments include an uprating on the limit

for gifts that Ministers can accept and retain, from £125 to £140.

The receipt of all gifts, in all cases, has to be reported to a Minister's departmental permanent secretary.

Ministers are also now being warned, explicitly, to maintain the secrecy of discussions in Cabinet committees, and a new code of conduct for the relationship between Ministers and Parliament is incorporated for the first time - along with the

new warning: "Ministers who knowingly mislead Parliament will be expected to offer their resignation to the Prime Minister."

In a foreword, Mr Blair says: "I should like to reaffirm my strong personal commitment to restoring the bond of trust between the British people and their Government. We are here to serve and we must all serve honestly and in the interests of those who gave us our positions of trust."

Cash for questions verdict on Tory four

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Four former Tory MPs are expected to be admonished today by the cross-party Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges for their role in the "cash for questions" affair centred on Mohammed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods.

The ex-MPs already have been censured over sleaze allegations by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The committee today is due to deliver its verdict on the four: Tim Smith, Michael Brown, Sir Andrew Bowden and Sir Michael Grylls.



Captain - locked to grid
Photograph:

They have all apologised to committee and, having lost their seats or retired from Parliament, the sanctions are limited if the committee decides to punish them for breaches in the rules governing the declaration of their private interests while they were MPs.

A fifth former MP criticised by Sir Gordon, Neil Hamilton, who was defeated at the general election by Martin Bell, has appealed against the findings by Sir Gordon and will have to wait at least until next week for the committee's judgement.

Although the Commons rose

last night for its 13-week summer break, the committee is anxious to clear as much of its work as quickly as possible and will meet again on Tuesday to consider the case of Mr Hamilton, a former minister.

Its report tomorrow follows damning criticism of the five MPs by the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, Sir Gordon Downey, in his report on the "cash-for-questions" affair earlier this month.

Hinting that the Committee may well accept Sir Gordon's findings on the relevant four former MPs, its chairman, Robert Sheldon, said the Downey Report would be "a major part" of its verdict.

But, even if the Committee agrees with Sir Gordon's conclusions - as it has in three wholly unrelated and separate cases already this week - it has virtually no powers over former MPs.

Mr Sheldon said: "All we can do is say how bad it was. We can bring them to the Bar of the House and lock them up in the Tower - but these are archaic."

Mr Hamilton and his wife Christine are to write a book. The couple have reached a deal with a publisher and are currently writing the non-fiction publication together.

The publishers have insisted that the subject matter of the book is kept strictly under wraps until September.

But the book does not concern the "cash-for-questions" row or the election battle with former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell, who won Mr Hamilton's Tatten seat.

"We are writing a book, but it is nothing to do with that affair," Mrs Hamilton said. "We are marching out on our own."

The couple hope sales of the book will help improve their financial situation. Mr Hamilton, who was censured in the Downey Report on parliamentary sleaze earlier this month, has admitted he needs to find new sources of income since he withdrew from an expensive libel action last year.



Umbrella politics: Labour candidate Andrew Slaughter braving the rain to round up votes for the by-election in Uxbridge, west London, yesterday. Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

Aberfan to be reimbursed for loss from disaster fund

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government announced yesterday that it was repaying to the Welsh mining village of Aberfan £150,000 taken from the disaster relief fund in the aftermath of the 1966 landslide which killed 144 people, mainly children.

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, ended more than 30 years of bitterness by an-

nouncing that the Government would repay to the village the money taken from a £2.5m disaster relief fund to help the National Coal Board clear nearby tips similar to the one which devastated the village.

Mr Davies said: "I have long made clear my view that there should have been no requirement in the first place for a contribution to be made from the disaster fund towards the cost of clearing the tips."

"I am pleased to announce today that I shall be making available a grant of £150,000 to repay the sum originally contributed and to supplement provision in the Aberfan Disaster Fund and in the Memorial Charity."

Officials from the Welsh Office will get in touch with both organisations to decide how the money could best be spent "for the benefit of the community of Aberfan", he added.

Welcoming the move, Aberfan survivor Gaynor Madgwick, who was eight years old when she was pulled from the wreckage of the village school, commented: "I'm very pleased, although it should not have taken this long to have the £150,000 returned to the fund."

Altogether 116 children and 28 adults perished in the avalanche of black slurry which engulfed the village, burying a school and destroying everything in its path. An entire class of 34 schoolchildren were among the victims.

Open your doors more widely, universities told

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Young people from poor backgrounds could be excluded from higher education if the Government fails to balance plans to introduce tuition fees with steps to widen access to university, a Labour MP has claimed.

Last month's report by the Dearing committee of inquiry recommended introducing tuition fees of around £1,000 for each year of a degree course for all full-time students, to be repaid after graduation. However, the committee recommended that means-tested grants for living costs should stay to help the poorer students.

Sir Ron Dearing moved to counter concerns from some MPs that government plans for fees would automatically deter poorer school-leavers from applying to university.

There had been no evidence of such a trend in Australia or New Zealand, which already levy tuition fees for higher ed-

ucation, Sir Ron said. The Government, announcing its response to the report last week, proposed a different system, under which all maintenance grants will be replaced by long-term loans, and means-tested tuition fees will be introduced.

Gerry Steinberg, Labour MP for the City of Durham, told Sir Ron that he believed poorer groups would be no better off under his proposal and would probably be worse off under the government's suggestions. "To get rid of grants, it seems to me, it's just going to deter youngsters, particularly from working class backgrounds, from coming into contact with higher education," he said.

Further education colleges are in financial crisis, reporting a deficit of £90m, a new survey showed yesterday.

An analysis of 347 colleges in England showed that two out of three had an operating deficit in the 1995/96 financial year and more than 1,000 teaching jobs were axed.

But despite the financial struggles, the pay of college principals has risen, with 16 per cent now earning more than £85,000 a year, the report by the Labour Research Department showed.

Some colleges have "very substantial" deficits, amounting to more than 10 per cent of total income in 24 cases, Labour Research, an independent union and labour movement organisation, found.

At Stanmore College in London, the deficit was almost 20 per cent of income, while at Ryecote College in Oxfordshire it reached 22 per cent.

The result of the financial crisis has been a cut in teaching staff, averaging 3 per cent in larger colleges, rising to 20 per cent in 14 cases.

The colleges, where three million young people and adults are taught every year, face a funding squeeze which stretches "unbroken" into the future, said the report. Many are cutting staff again this year.

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CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	1	£5,000,000	£5,000,000
Match 5 plus bonus ball	17	£60,139	£1,022,363
Match 5	620	£1,030	£638,600
Match 4	36,022	£39	£1,404,858
Match 3	615,977	£10	£6,159,770
TOTALS	652,637		£14,226,591

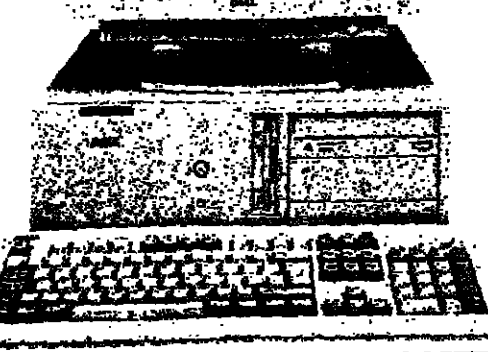
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Clive Anderson: Presents C4's *Whose Line is it Anyway?*

Have I got news for you... the cheap TV comedies that are a joke too far

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

Would you watch a show about four comedians discussing the wacky world of antiques? Or perhaps a comedy quiz-show about health and hypochondria? If not then maybe four lads and a quiz master ad-libbing at the worlds of cookery or gardening? Those are some of the proposals being put to the makers of BBC2's *Have I Got News For You* in what was described this week as the boom in "smart-assed television".

And while the march of the comedy-quiz show format across our television schedules was criticised for elbowing out traditional comedy writers, Hat Trick Productions - makers of

HIGNFY - announced that it is planning a comedy-quiz about advertising for later this year.

Veteran humorist Alan Coren and his writing partner on BBC *Call My Bluff*, Sandi Toksvig, have criticised the dominance of the schedules by what are described as "show-off shows" such as *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* and *They Think It's All Over* (both also BBC).

"I'm very bored with smart-assed television," Ms Toksvig told Radio 5 this week. "Four people in suits with no scripts making it up as they go along. I can't be doing with it any more it's cheap and nasty. It's a notion that we can get rid of writers in this country and the crafted project. It's a conveyor belt approach to making television."

The modern panel-game boom started with production companies such as Hat Trick lifting formats from Radio 4 shows such as the *News Quiz* and *Just a Minute* and creating programmes like *Who's Line is it Anyway?* and *They Think It's All Over*. Before that television had to rely on *Call My Bluff*.

Today, while television churns out shows like *Space Cadets* on Channel 4 and *Shooting Stars* on BBC2, Radio 4 is looking for new games. A recent attempt was *And I'm The Queen of Sheba* which is about lying and stars Labour MP Ken Livingstone.

"There is still plenty of old-fashioned scripted comedy on television," Mr Coren said yesterday. "But it's crap. Things like *Chalk*, which was set in a school,

or *The Peter Principle*, which is set in a bank, could have been made 30 years ago and would have been made better."

Mr Coren, who appears regularly on the *News Quiz*, believes quiz-comedies are made partly because they are cheaper than situation comedies. "You couldn't afford the script development or to fill a sitcom with the stars who are happy to



They Think It's All Over: Chairman Nick Hancock caught between team captains David Gower (left) and Gary Lineker

go on the quiz shows. It's probably a quarter to a third cheaper to make these shows."

Jimmy Mulville, joint managing director of Hat Trick and the first producer of *HIGNFY*, admitted yesterday that the format had probably run its course: "It's a worry. The topic of the show has to have some kind of national import and I think we're coming to the end of top-

ics that touch the zeitgeist. Some of the suggestions we've been offered following the success of *Have I Got News For You* have been ridiculous - even a funny panel game about antiques. People think you can put anything through this sausage machine."

Mr Mulville believes the format is popular because it is an efficient use of comedians: "It's just a question of creating a struc-

tured conversation. Stand-ups behind a mike struggle a bit on TV, and it uses up all their material."

Mr Mulville said he did not believe the rise of the format was putting writers out of work because many of the newer shows employ writers.

Geoffrey Perkins, head of comedy at the BBC, denied that comedy quiz-shows were pushing out scripted material.

"There is an enormous amount of scripted comedy here and we are always looking for new sources of comedy talent," he said. "There will be at least 12 news scripted comedy shows on the BBC in the next nine months. There is a danger that you can do too many of these and for some channels they are cheap fillers, but no one can describe *HIGNFY* as cheap filler."

Charities win test case on care for the elderly

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Elderly people with less than £10,000 in savings cannot be forced to pay for their care, no matter how short of resources the local authority is, the Court of Appeal ruled yesterday.

The decision was seen as a major victory for the charities Help the Aged and Age Concern and has implications for the 170,000 elderly in council-run homes throughout the UK.

The charities had brought a test case in the Court of Appeal after a local council made an 87-year-old pensioner, Charlotte Blanchard, pay for her own

nursing home care until her savings dropped below £1,500 - the cost of a funeral.

The Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, and two other appeal judges overturned a High Court decision in favour of Sefston council which allowed the authority to avoid paying for care for the elderly because of its own limited resources.

In the November 1995 Budget, the Government announced that when individuals' capital fell below £10,000, local authorities were legally obliged to pay for a person's care. When capital was between £10,000 and £16,000, the authority paid part of the care, and when it was

more than £16,000 the individual had to meet all the costs. Sefston argued that it was entitled to take into account a person's capital because of its own limited resources even though her savings were below the levels prescribed.

Lord Woolf said had Mrs Blanchard had no capital, Sefston would have looked after her under its statutory duties. "Their refusal to do so was not dependent upon her condition but her capital resources," he said.

"This is demonstrated by the fact that once her capital resources were reduced below £1,500 they provided the assistance she was seeking."

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news

Banned CFCs' racket broken

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Customs officers across Europe and the European Commission have uncovered a CFC smuggling racket which had imported 1,000 tonnes of the banned, ozone-destroying chemicals from China worth millions of pounds.

British Customs said one UK broker of the valuable chemicals had been involved, but he had not known they had been smuggled into Europe with false documentation and therefore faced no charges.

For the past two years, industry and governments have suspected that some CFC users have been evading the Europe-wide ban on consumption and production of the chemicals. Widely used in refrigeration and air conditioning, they are being phased out because they are highly damaging to the earth's protective ozone layer.

Now, after co-operating for more than a year, customs officials and the commission's anti-fraud unit have had their first major breakthrough.

Taiwan, a small German company based near Frankfurt, is alleged to be behind the smuggling operation.

The Brussels-based anti-fraud unit said 80 containers, each containing 12 one-tonne steel cylinders of the chemicals, had been imported through Rotterdam from China and their contents distributed around the Continent over the past year. They had been falsely labelled as a non-CFC chemical, and had invalid Chinese certificates of origin.

When the CFCs were re-exported to other EU nations, the accompanying paperwork said they were recycled CFCs. These can still be legally traded along with any CFCs stockpiled before

the 1995 ban, but by now there should be only small quantities available.

Heinrich Kraus, CFC expert in Germany's federal environment ministry, said: "This is the breakthrough we've been waiting for. For some time we have believed there has been considerable smuggling, but we've not been able to detect a specific case."

Under the Montreal Protocol, an international green treaty, developing nations like China can still produce CFCs until 2010. But they are banned from exporting the chemicals to developed countries.

The refrigeration industry had been expecting the price to rise rapidly after the 1995 ban due to stocks running down. But the market price has remained flat or risen only slowly, indicating ample supplies of CFCs - much to the fury of chemical giants like ICI which have invested heavily in developing ozone-friendly substitutes.

Malcolm Horlick, Secretary of the Institute of Refrigeration, said: "There is still a huge amount of concern about the quantity of CFCs still available and the low price."

The remaining CFCs are traded at £6 to £18 a kilogramme. David Brown, of the Environmental Investigation Agency, a green campaigning organisation, said: "Small, fly-by-night companies pop up, bombarding companies which still use these chemicals with offers offering them at rock-bottom prices."

Since the early 1980s, an ozone hole has been opening above the Antarctic each spring, allowing dangerous ultraviolet radiation to reach the surface. Thinning of the ozone layer has also been detected over northern latitudes.

Eighty years on, the killing fields rest in peace



Remembrance: The Tyne Cot cemetery, Passchendaele, where 11,908 soldiers are buried; and the battlefields where 34,984 lie missing

Photographs: Brian Harris/Canadian Archives



Battle weary: Wounded Canadian soldiers take time to rest

Ian Burrell

It is only a small village in Flanders, with a cluster of brick houses, but it gave its name to a Commonwealth Calvary.

The 1917 assault on Passchendaele caused the most unspeakable suffering of the Great War, surpassing even the carnage of the Somme.

The rows of white tombstones in the Tyne Cot cemetery at the top of the battlefield mark the graves of 11,908 men and make up the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world.

Eighty years ago yesterday, as the battle commenced, a barrage of ammunition hitherto unimaginable in warfare was hurled upon men struggling to find shelter in the mud.

As the bombardment continued, the rain and the shells obliterated even the trenches themselves, leaving the bodies of those who died in them unrecognisable. The epitaph on many of the headstones is simply: "Known unto God."

The cemetery is also a memorial to the 34,984 whose bodies were never found, who

simply disappeared into the mud.

The small ridge on which Passchendaele is set was Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's target for the final stage of what was officially called the third battle of Ypres. As they crawled through three miles of mud, towards the village, the British troops were cut down by a hail of bullets and shells. Some 35 men died for every metre gained.

Such was the quagmire that regular supplies to the front collapsed and machine guns and rifles were jammed with mud.

The men in the shell holes of the front line were forced to fight hand to hand. Passchendaele was reached, more than three months later, on 6 November.

Eighty years on, some of the veterans have been returning to the battlefield to remember old comrades.

"Passchendaele was the worst of all," said Dick Trafford, 99, from Lancashire. "It was hell itself. At the Somme you either got wounded or you got killed. [At Passchendaele] you got killed, wounded, or you drowned in the sludge."

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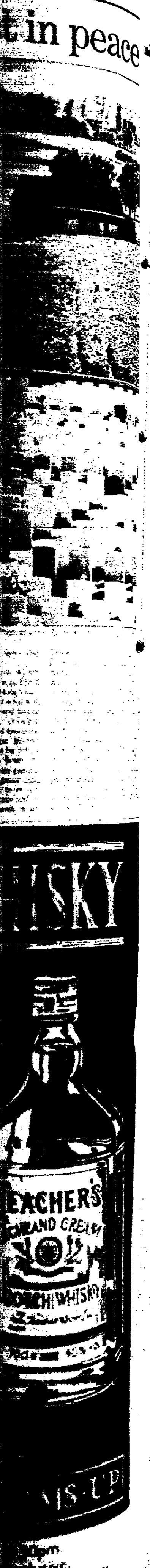
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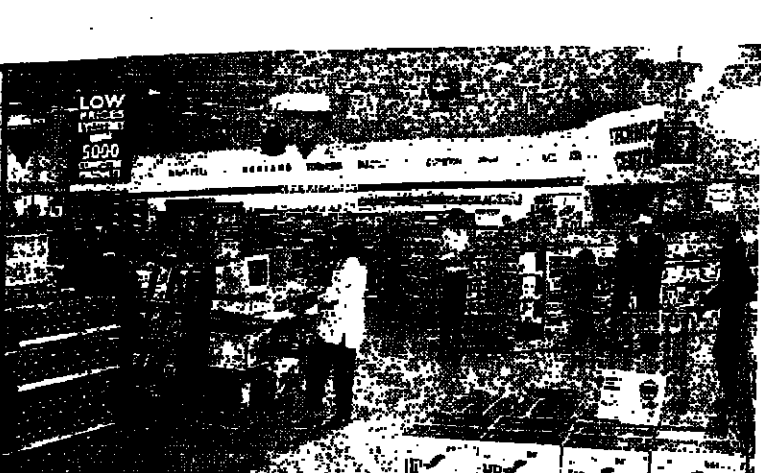
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news



Pavlos Georgiou: 'He tried to conceal his guilt all along'

Aids case lover jailed for 15 months

Ian Burrell

Cypriot fisherman Pavlos Georgiou was yesterday jailed for 15 months for knowingly infecting British divorcee Janette Pink with Aids.

Looking shocked and dejected, Georgiou, 40, was taken straight from the court under police escort to start his prison sentence in Nicosia, the island capital. Georgiou's twin brother, Petros, broke down in tears outside the court in Larnaca and said he was "surprised" at the sentence. Judge Antonis Liatsos said that the

only reason he did not impose the full two-year penalty was that Georgiou, a father-of-four, was himself dying of Aids and only had a short time to live.

After the sentence, Ms Pink, 45, said, from her home in Basildon, Essex: "This will hopefully make Paul (Pavlos) realise what he has done and stop him from doing it again."

She added: "He just did not care that he might ... make me die, and he has never shown any remorse."

When Georgiou was convicted on Tuesday after a trial which spread

over three months, he said: "I'm going to die soon. What is going to scare me any more? Even death does not scare me." But yesterday he looked stunned as the verdict was read out.

Judge Liatsos said: "He is tragically condemned and it would be expected he would have tried to avoid putting others in the same condition ... without telling her, he was ejaculating death in her for months."

The test case was brought under an obscure 1957 law intended to prevent the spread of cholera, typhoid and venereal disease on Cyprus.

Judge Liatsos said the British colonial legislation under which Georgiou was charged was insufficient and that such a crime would normally merit a stiffer penalty.

The case was only brought at all because Ms Pink, a mother-of-two, flew 2,000 miles to Cyprus to give evidence against her former lover, despite being chronically ill.

The couple had met through friends in 1993 shortly after Ms Pink had arrived to start a new life on the island after divorcing her husband of 20 years. During three days

of court questioning last May, Ms Pink said that when she and Georgiou became lovers she did not think to use condoms because they had both been in long-standing marriages. She later discovered that Georgiou's wife had died from Aids.

In his defence, Georgiou claimed that Ms Pink had known his HIV status but had been so much in love with him that she insisted on unprotected sex. He also alleged that Ms Pink had a succession of sexual encounters with other Cypriot men.

Judge Liatsos was unconvinced.

"[Georgiou] tried to conceal his guilt all along," he said. "Taking into account the severity of the offence committed, I have no hesitation in stating that a prison sentence is unavoidable."

Aids charities in Britain said the sentence could stigmatise and isolate sufferers. Director of the National Aids Trusts, Derek Bodell, said: "It is very dangerous if we try to introduce similar laws. People will feel they cannot disclose their HIV status or will not even want to know their status because ignorance will be bliss."

Teachers say end school daily prayers

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

Britain's most conservative teaching union yesterday called for an end to compulsory daily worship in schools.

The law obliging schools to hold religious assemblies each day should be changed to require collective worship only once a week, the Professional Association of Teachers annual conference in Glasgow declared.

A relaxation in the law would merely reflect what is already happening in schools, many teachers believe. Nearly half of all secondary schools do not hold daily religious assemblies, because they have neither the space nor the teachers willing to conduct them.

Only two months ago, the National Association of Head Teachers also voted at its annual conference for legal change to end schools' obligation to hold morning prayers.

The PAT backed calls for change despite passionate appeals from some delegates to bolster the place of religion in schools.

Retired headteacher and clergyman, Hywel Lewis, said declining Sunday school attendance meant children came to

school "knowing nothing about God or Jesus Christ. They don't even know the Lord's Prayer".

The Rev Lewis, from Cardiff, said daily religious assemblies also provided a vital opportunity to bring everyone in a school together once every day to reinforce its ethos.

Kim Riley, a student teacher from Manchester, feared that a change in the law would lead to even fewer religious services in schools.

"If we specify a minimum of once a week, my fear is that this will be seen as an excuse in some schools not to have any collective worship at all."

But Caroline Wigmore, a teacher at Puplar First School, Merton, south London, said that enforcing an unenforceable law was "sacrificing quality to quantity".

And a Leicester headteacher, Pam Weston, pointed out that teaching about religion was enshrined in the school curriculum through compulsory religious education.

"Collective worship is a different thing, and it gives lots of schools lots of problems - particularly those which have a number of other faiths represented in their pupils," she said.



Child's play: A girl riding the carousel at the opening yesterday of Daisy and Tom, the new megastore for children up to 10 in Chelsea, London

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

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Australia ski resort disaster: All 20 people missing feared dead in freezing temperatures

Hope fades for buried victims of landslide

Robert Milliken
Sydney

After two nights buried under rubble in freezing temperatures, in what Australians call the "high country", there seems little hope that any of the 20 landslide victims in the alpine village of Thredbo will be brought out alive.

Rescue workers found one body last night, and will resume this morning their perilous task of picking through the wreckage of two ski lodges piece by piece, perched on the side of a hill below a road that collapsed just before midnight on Wednesday, sending the buildings crashing into each other as their occupants slept.

The slide hit so suddenly that it swept away a woman who was taking a late-night stroll with her husband. Walking a few paces ahead of her, he survived.

Miraculously, only one person was staying in the uppermost lodge, Carrinya, owned by a ski club in Canberra. At weekends the lodge would be packed with families.

In Bimbadeen, the lodge downhill from Carrinya, about 19 workers employed by the company that runs the Thredbo resort had retired when the disaster struck. They are believed to be Australians and Americans.

Holidaymakers and skiers in surrounding lodges that somehow stayed standing dashed from their beds when they heard a roar that some likened to a tornado. Ron Stiebel, an Australian tourist, said: "It just looked like a vacuum cleaner had emptied a giant load of debris on to the side of the hill."

Glenn Milne, a political journalist with Australia's Channel Seven television network, was

on holiday with his family in a lodge next door. He told Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio: "It was like an enormous gust of wind. It shook our lodge to its foundations. Then we heard a car alarm going off. My wife, Karen, jumped out of bed and walked out to the veranda, part of the railing of which had been taken away by the rubble."

"She said, 'My God, there are cars everywhere'. As well as buildings coming down, all the terrace car parks had come down too. So cars were smashed on top of the lodges. I huddled



Kerry Muller, left, is comforted by her friend, Julie Pearson

my two little daughters up and ran them to the bottom of the hill because the whole thing was unstable.

"When I got back up, we could hear voices in the rubble, at least three. One was definitely a male. Someone I was with said there was possibly a female as well. We tried to get to them, we were trying to claw the rubble away to get to the voices. But, as we were doing so, the cars above us that had pancaked on to the concrete were teetering on the edge. We were still trying to get to them when the emergency services arrived. They took one look at the situation, identified the places where we heard the voices and ordered us out. They said it was far too dangerous."

"The worst thing about it was you just had to walk away."

Another survivor, John Hutchings from Adelaide, said he heard voices in two areas of the rubble minutes after the slide came to a halt. "I can't be very hopeful," he said. "It's exceedingly dangerous and exceedingly difficult for the emergency service men. They can pick bits off the top, but there's a chance it may all slip away again and take them with it."

It was this uncertainty about the rubble's stability that made police delay starting the rescue operation for 12 hours on the advice of geophysical experts who were flown in by helicopter from Sydney, about 250 miles to the north. As darkness fell yesterday evening, and temperatures dropped below freezing, a chain of about 200 rescuers prepared to work through the night under floodlights.

Their hopes dimmed after sound recorders and cameras lowered into the debris failed to detect any signs or sounds of life. They feared that any survivors who might be trapped in air pockets would succumb to hypothermia after a day and two nights in freezing temperatures.

Even as the rescue operation got under way, questions were being asked about the cause of the disaster. Conservationists argue that Thredbo has been over-developed with too many lodges on the fragile mountain slope, and that the landslide was a tragedy waiting to happen.



A rescuer being carefully lowered from a helicopter to examine the wreckage in the hope of finding survivors Photograph: AFP

Mayor of DC to be stripped of his powers

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Marion Barry, the much-criticised Mayor of Washington DC, faces losing the bulk of his powers under proposals agreed yesterday. Mr Barry, re-elected in 1994 after serving a jail term for drug offences, will have to hand control of nine committees, including public works, housing, personnel, schools and police, to a federally appointed financial-control board whose job will be to ensure probity and sound accounting.

It is the latest stage in a struggle for control of the capital, which for decades was administered by the federal authorities until it was decided in 1973 that it should have an elected administration, just like any other US city. The move was largely a response to pressure from the city's black majority. Mr Barry, who like most of the councilors is black, benefited. But his conduct during his first term, which included being discovered smoking crack cocaine with a prostitute in the lobby of a hotel (he insists it was a set-up), made him even more controversial.

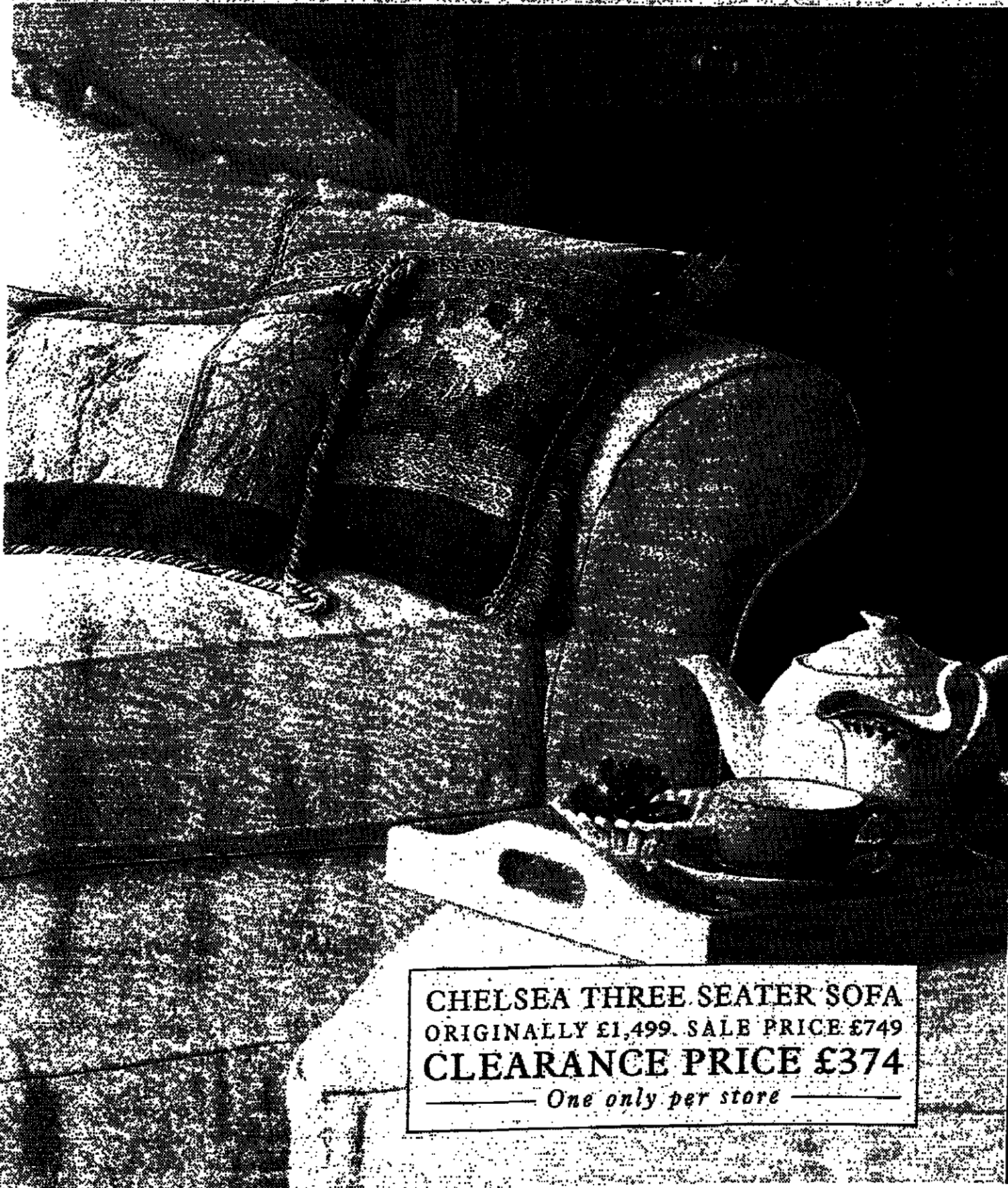
His race, and his influence with the black majority, guaranteed him re-election when he left prison.

But it also ensured city politics would be perpetual guerrilla war between Washington's growing black population and its declining white population.

Mr Barry's return to office prompted many whites to move from the Washington-administered District of Columbia into the adjacent states of Maryland and Virginia, a process that continues.

Now joined by better-off blacks, they complain not just of poor city services, but of mismanagement, corruption and neglect of the infrastructure that leaves Washington unworthy to serve as a showcase for the US.

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Fire fight: Flames leaping from a cargo plane which crashed at Newark International Airport, New Jersey, yesterday. Five people on board escaped with minor injuries Photograph: AP

Lebanon jails Red Army five

Robert Fisk
Beirut

The leading lights of the Lebanese judiciary were in court, five judges led by the incorruptible Soheil Abdul-Samad in his red, black and white robes. The might of the Japanese press corps was there: 16 journalists, including representatives of five television channels. So was the ice-cold figure of the Japanese embassy's first secretary, Tamotsu Sei, his well-groomed black moustache set above unsmiling lips, stiff white shirt beneath a grimly dark suit in the stifling summer courtroom. Only the ageing defendants from the Japanese Red Army – whom Mr Sei would like to pack off to Tokyo for more serious trials – were missing.

They were allowed to relax in Beirut's Roumieh prison yesterday while Judge Abdul-Samad briskly convicted all five



Japanese most wanted: Kozo Okamoto, Kazuo Tohira, Masao Adachi, Haruo Wako and Mariko Yamamoto

– once regarded as among the most dangerous killers in the world – to a mere three years in prison for illegally entering Lebanon. Needless to say, Kozo Okamoto – who led a 1972 attack on Tel Aviv airport which left 24 pilgrims dead – Kazuo Tohira, Masao Adachi, Haruo Wako and the only woman, Mariko Yamamoto, will all appeal against the sentence and against the court's decision to deport them from Lebanon

when they are released from prison.

Nor is it difficult to see why. The Japanese government would like to try them for a score of crimes and lock them up for the rest of their lives; hence the presence of the grim-faced Mr Sei in court. The five defendants would like to spend the rest of their lives in Lebanese retirement, which is more or less what they were doing last February when Lebanese security

police arrested all five in Beirut and charged them with forging visa stamps and holding false passports.

Needless to say, their original arrest was accompanied by a good deal of rhetoric. The *Jerusalem Post* accused Lebanon of "sheltering" the notorious Okamoto – failing to point out that Israel had itself imprisoned him for 13 years but then blithely let him go free in return for captured Israeli soldiers.

The Lebanese authorities insisted that they had only just discovered the presence of the five, three of whom had been using Singaporean, Chinese and Brazilian passports to travel in and out of Lebanon. Lebanese justice, we were told, was taking its natural course – until it was discovered that one of Lebanon's top security officials just happened to have business connections in Japan. He turned out to be a witness against the

five – and then took early retirement.

In the end, the Red Army five were convicted only of illegal entry into Lebanon – a crime committed by countless armies over the past 1,000 years but one which will see the defendants behind bars for the next 30 months, since they have already spent six months at Roumieh. Mr Sei, who had hoped the court would deport the five to Tokyo, went back to his embassy empty-handed. But be sure that we shall see him again. Indeed, only yesterday morning, the Japanese ambassador was talking of the vast amount of yen that his country was already spending on agricultural projects in Lebanon. Japan was ready to do even more for the country, he said. And one wondered what the price of an air ticket to Tokyo would be when the Red Army five walk out of prison in 2000.

significant shorts

Russia delays pull-out from Georgian enclave

President Eduard Shevardnadze sent his defence minister to Moscow yesterday to consult on the future of Russian peace-keepers in Georgia but Russian military officials said a pullout was not imminent.

Vardiko Nadibaidze was due to Russian Defence Minister Igor Sergeyev and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Anatoly Kvashnin in Moscow.

The mandate for the 1,500-strong force stationed between Georgia and its breakaway region of Abkhazia expired yesterday. Observers fear their withdrawal could reignite the 1992-93 separatist war which killed 10,000 people.

Reuters – Tbilisi

Ford factory for Belarus

Ford has launched its first car assembly plant in the former Soviet Union with a \$20m (£12m) project in Belarus, a country plagued by political and economic turmoil recently. Initially, the plant will assemble 6,000 Ford Escort and Ford Transit vehicles a year, officials said at the unveiling in Obchack, 20km from the capital Minsk.

AP – Minsk

IMF gets tough on Kenya

Kenya yesterday sought more time to meet International Monetary Fund demands to combat corruption or lose a key aid package, but said much of what the IMF wanted was political. The IMF demanded in June that Kenya take action by yesterday to show its commitment to fight corruption and reform the energy sector or it would let a three-year aid package worth \$205m lapse.

Reuters – Nairobi

India revives Agni missile

Despite strong international opposition, India intends to revive development of a long-range ballistic missile capable of hitting targets deep inside China or Pakistan. Work on the Agni missile, which has a range of 2,500kms, was halted three years ago.

AP – New Delhi

Thugs blow up traffic jam

Thugs who were fleeing a car accident with police threw two grenades on a highway congested with slow-moving vehicles, killing seven people and wounding up to 40, police said yesterday. The explosions occurred on Wednesday night at Kibuye, two kms south-west of the capital of Kampala.

AP – Kampala

Italy holds illegal immigrants

Italian police yesterday detained 102 people trying to enter Italy illegally on a fishing boat on a small island between Sicily and Libya. Police said three members of the crew were arrested after the boat, which was flying a Tunisian flag, arrived at Lampedusa island. The crew will face charges of attempting to smuggle illegal immigrants into Italy.

Reuters – Lampedusa

Red Cross cuts 100 jobs

The Swiss-run International Committee of the Red Cross said it was axing 100 jobs at its Geneva headquarters. Spokeswoman Doris Pfister said the cuts were to reduce costs and were part of a restructuring to help the agency concentrate more on field work.

Reuters – Geneva

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Nigeria tops world league of sleaze

Steve Crawshaw

The bad news: corruption around the world is as bad as it was. The good news: it is a bigger international issue than ever before. The consequence: things have a chance of getting better in the medium or longer term. That, in effect, is the message contained in a report published yesterday by the Berlin-based organisation, Transparency International.

The organisation focuses on corruption worldwide, and produces an annual index of the perceived goodies and baddies. Nigeria, unsurprisingly, is the worst of the lot. The Nordic countries walk off with the prizes

Best and worst

Most corrupt*	Least corrupt
Nigeria	Denmark
Bolivia	Finland
Colombia	Sweden
Russia	New Zealand
Pakistan	Canada

(*of the 52 countries with sufficient evidence to make a ranking)

—Denmark, Finland and Sweden hold first, second and third place respectively as the "Mr Cleans" of the world, and Norway comes in at number seven.

Just behind Nigeria come Bolivia, Colombia and Russia. But Transparency International is at pains to emphasise that

the blame does not just lie with the developing countries which cluster at the bottom of the list. In the words of Peter Eigen, chairman of Transparency International: "A large share of the corruption is the explicit product of multinational corporations, headquartered in leading industrialised countries, using massive bribery and kickbacks to buy contracts in the developing world and the countries in transition [namely, the post-Communist economies]".

The organisation is also keen to emphasise that better governance, with less corruption, can have spin-offs for commercial success and national prosperity. The authors point to

a comparative study of Singapore (number nine on the list) and Mexico (sixth from bottom) which suggests that the difference in levels of corruption is equivalent to raising the marginal tax rate by 20 per cent — with huge knock-on implications

for inward investment. In Mr Eigen's words: "Every day, the poor scores [in the corruption index] are not being dealt with means more impoverishment, less education, less health care."

The publication of the index has sometimes had remarkable

knock-on effects. In Pakistan, which came off second worst in last year's index, the index itself became a national reference point. In Malaysia, the government reacted angrily to its low ranking, and complained of Western "cultural imperialism".

The chairman of the advisory council is Olusegun Obasanjo, the respected former Nigerian leader who was jailed by the present regime. One of the British members is Ian Martin, a former secretary-general of Amnesty International — another reminder of the organisation's non-partisan status.

Transparency International admits that there can be no precisely "objective" measurement of corruption. None the less, the index is compiled from a poll of business polls, and therefore gives a revealing consensus view. Where there is large variance in perceptions, this is indicated. Because a minimum of four polls is required before a country can be included in the list, Nigeria can take comfort in the fact that it may not be the

most corrupt country in the world — merely the country whose corruption has been most thoroughly attested to.

The new international focus on corruption may be yet another unexpected result of the end of the Cold War. One early knock-on effect in Africa was that democracy suddenly ceased to be an irrelevant concept. For decades, the Soviet Union and the West had backed different dictatorships, caring little about the implications for the continent's peoples. As the superpower rivalry fell away, so, too, did the strength of those regimes. Now, the spotlight is on corruption, perceived as a reinforcement of existing poverty. The light may be shining, but nobody is expecting the early arrival of a bribe-free world.



Carnage born out of Israel's policy of rejection

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£10,000-24,999	4.00	3.20
£5,000-9,999	2.95	2.36
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£1-499	0.50	0.40

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Jerusalem bombing

Carnage born out of Israel's policy of rejection

Netanyahu's dilemma

Patrick Cockburn

It was a contradictory policy, always likely to provoke a crisis. From the moment he became prime minister of Israel last year Benjamin Netanyahu demanded total co-operation over security from Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader. But he rejected all other aspects of partnership with the Palestinians. This included an end to Israel's occupation of most of the West Bank, as agreed by the previous Israeli government in 1995. Mr Netanyahu has hinted he plans to pull out of just 40 per cent of the West Bank, not 90 per cent, as Mr Arafat expected. The outcome was inevitable. The only surprise about the bombs on Wednesday was that they were so long coming. For months Shin Bet, the Israeli internal security force, predicted violence. But Mr Netanyahu seemed to feel that by starting to build a settlement in Jerusalem at Abu Ghneim, called Har Homa by Israel, he had called Mr Arafat's bluff. The price of his miscalculation was paid by traders and shoppers killed and maimed in Mahane Yehuda market. Mr Netanyahu always said he

he thinks he can have his cake and eat it. By putting maximum pressure on Mr Arafat and the Palestinians he can force them to accept a Carthaginian peace, in which there will be no Palestinian state but a strange entity whose powers Mr Netanyahu once compared to those of Andorra. But this Palestinian Andorra will somehow have a ferocious security force capable of rounding up all potential suicide bombers.

It has not happened, nor is it likely to. Mr Arafat is dictatorial but he does not act in a vacuum. The West Bank and Gaza Palestinians are among the most politically aware people in the world; no Palestinian political leader could round up thousands of militants, which means imprisonment without trial and torture, without a measure of public support.

The key to Mr Netanyahu's policy is that not only does he refuse to recognise the Palestinian right to self-determination, but that he does not see them as human beings who behave much like Israelis would in similar circumstances.

His books and speeches display a colonial mentality, full of ethnic stereotypes. His explanations of how Palestinians will come to heel, if dealt with sternly, sound like excerpts from Kipling or John Buchan. The Oslo accords, agreed by Israel and the Palestinians in 1993, were not the result of the milk of human kindness suddenly flowing through the Middle East; the negotiators recognised a certain balance of power, much in favour of Israel, but one in which the Palestinians were not wholly impotent.

Mr Netanyahu does not see it that way. For him Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated prime minister, gave away far more than was necessary. To be fair, it is a view widely shared by the Israeli electorate. Often forgotten is the fact that in May last year they gave a large majority to parties effectively opposed to Oslo; in other words, the maximum they would offer was far less than the minimum the Palestinians would accept.

It is this which makes the situation so lethal. Mr Netanyahu is a man of great ingenuity, but not of great political intelligence. He has little idea of how Palestinian politics work and probably feels he does not have to. He is much better informed about the US and appears to calculate that Washington may put little pressure on him. This has proved true in recent months. But Mr Netanyahu won the election by promising peace and security – and the bombs in Mahane Yehuda shows he can deliver neither.

A simpler explanation is that viewed such attacks as terrorism, which can be switched on and off by Mr Arafat. But all that is needed for a suicide bomb attack are explosives (obtained from old landmines), a bag of nails and a Palestinian willing to die in order to kill Israelis. Mr Netanyahu has ensured that such Palestinians are in plentiful supply.

The reason for the violence is obvious to half the Israeli population, all Palestinians and most foreign governments. The surprise is that Mr Netanyahu does not see it himself; perhaps he does. One theory is that he is at heart an ideologue who wants to reverse the Oslo accords. By blocking implementation he knows there will be violent Palestinian reaction, which would allow him to re-occupy Palestinian enclaves.

A simpler explanation is that



Time to pray: Two Israelis reflect on the marketplace bombing after lighting a memorial candle to their 13 compatriots. The market was reopened yesterday amid tight security and fears of further attacks. Photograph: Jacqueline Arzi/AP

Arafat trapped between the angry and the frustrated

Arafat's dilemma

Stephanie Nolen

Yasser Arafat was far from the smoke and shrapnel when two suicide bombers blew themselves up in a busy Jewish market on Wednesday, but he was none the less badly injured.

The explosions have left the Palestinian leader trapped, under intense pressure to act but faced with an array of equally unpalatable choices.

In an emergency meeting after the bombing, which left 15 dead and more than 170 injured, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his security cabinet produced a list of demands for Mr Arafat, "first and foremost to fight the terror groups and their infrastructure". Israel blames the militant Palestinian organisation Hamas for the bombing, and Mr Arafat and his police for letting Hamas get away with it.

Mr Arafat must extradite Palestinians wanted by Israel,



Bombing suspects: Majid Qaisiyeh and Saled Al-Tel



most take "immediate steps" against high-ranking officials in his police force who are accused of planning attacks on Israelis, and must resume full co-operation with Israeli security services – and until he does, Mr Netanyahu said, there will be no more peace talks.

The Israeli Prime Minister called his demands reasonable, indeed, basic, in the context of the peace process: he was echoed by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and

most of the international community. But Israel could hardly have given Mr Arafat a more impossible list of demands. "There is simply no way he can do this," said Dr Khalil Shikqi, head of the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies, a Nablus think-tank. "Israel has weakened him so far, he is fighting for his own survival, and Hamas is as much a threat to him as it is to Israelis. If he does what Israel demands, he will be discredited past any recovery."

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A year and a half ago, after a series of bus bombings that left 66 Israelis dead and gutted the peace process, Mr Arafat was able to take forceful action against Hamas and Islamic Jihad; and indeed, he seriously damaged the infrastructure of both organisations. But back then, the PLO leader had just won election as president with 88 per cent of the vote; he had public support, because the Israeli army had recently left the West Bank cities; the economic situation was good and the peace process was going well.

"Today, none of those things is true," said Dr Shikqi. "Plus, he is facing wide allegations of corruption and human rights abuses."

Palestinian police have made some arrests in the West Bank towns they control, but Mr Arafat is in no position to start another crackdown on Islamists. While the suicide bombings are not condoned by the majority of Palestinians, Hamas as a political party does have a solid support base. Nor will it serve Mr Arafat now to be seen as caving in to Israeli demands. "He is not going to put himself on the line when Israel is doing everything it can to discredit him," Dr Shikqi said.

So what will he do? Palestinian commentators believe Mr Arafat will take some localised action against Hamas and Jihad, when he finds out who was responsible for this bombing.

Then, he will have to wait out the Israeli anger, hoping his own population does not erupt first.

Palestinian political analyst Ghassan Khatib argues that Israel is being unrealistic in asking Mr Arafat to take measures now. "They don't understand that the violence is a result of the stagnation of the peace process," he said, citing settlement building and the closure of the Palestinian territories in particular. "Israelis need to ask themselves why 20-year-olds are so eager to commit suicide."

Yesterday morning, Israeli security forces arrested the families of two young men from the West Bank village of Dhariyeh and took them for genetic testing, attempting to identify the corpses of the suicide bombers. The two young men, Saled Al-Tel and Majid Qaisiyeh, disappeared from Dhariyeh 15 months ago and were the subject of a joint PA-Israeli search, because it was feared they might be planning such an attack. They were not known to be members of Hamas, although their families said they were "quite religious", and neither was married, in keeping with the profile of the typical suicide bomber.

Economic war declared on Palestine

Eric Silver

Israel yesterday retaliated for Wednesday's twin suicide bombings in a Jerusalem fruit and vegetable market, which killed 13 Israeli civilians and wounded another 170, by declaring economic war on the two million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Armed troops barred tens of thousands of day labourers from crossing the old "green-line" border to jobs in Israeli agriculture, industry and services. A reinforced military garrison laid siege to seven West Bank towns now under Palestinian self-rule. "No one," a military spokesman said, "can come in or out."

In West Bank villages still under Israeli control, the security services rounded up 28 Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. The Palestinian police are reported to have detained dozens more. But the Israelis had not yet carried out their threat to send commandos into Palestinian-controlled areas to pick up alleged ring-leaders.

Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing coalition has indicated that the closure will not be lifted in a hurry. "After the Mahane Yehuda bombing," a government spokesman, Moshe Fogel, told *The Independent*, "we're not going to say business as usual. Yasser Arafat has to convince us that he is serious. There has to be a consistent policy of fighting terror."

Until then, the peace negotiations will remain in limbo. "The basis of the peace process," Mr Fogel insisted, "has to be the understanding

that violence is not a legitimate diplomatic tool."

As an example of Israel's demands, he complained that a week ago Israeli forces arrested a band of Palestinian policemen on the way to carry out an attack. The evidence, he claimed, led to the Palestinian police commander, General Ghazi Jabali. Mr Arafat was informed, but did nothing about it. Israel has now issued an arrest warrant against the general.

Israeli investigators were still trying last night to identify the suicide bombers. Inquiries were focused on two known Hamas operatives from the village of Dhariyeh, near Hebron, who went into hiding a year ago, but police scientists wanted to complete DNA tests before confirming their suspicions. A leaflet in the name of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, claimed responsibility for the bombing, which it said was in revenge for a poster distributed in Hebron last month which depicted the prophet Mohammed as a pig.

The Mahane Yehuda market defiantly reopened for trade yesterday morning. "We cannot be broken," said Uri Mizrahi, who was up at 5.30am to stock his vegetable stall. Shoppers lit candles at the site of the bombing as police stood guard.

Fifty-eight of the wounded were still being treated in Jerusalem hospitals yesterday. One was reported to be in critical condition. Another 13, including two badly-burned teenage girls, were in a serious state. Most of the dead were buried yesterday, but one was still unidentified.

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Ethically, Labour must be on the side of the angels

If David Simon were to grow wings and float up to the 18th floor of Canary Wharf, appearing outside our windows with a halo, we should not be surprised. He is a man of utter probity and propriety (Tony Blair, a man of the highest integrity (Margaret Beckett), a prominent, successful businessman coming into government to work unpaid, in the public service (Peter Mandelson). For all we know, the imminent, from the Vatican or the British Institute of Management, whichever is the higher authority.

Mockery apart, the Prime Minister is to be congratulated on his boldness in bringing talent, wherever it may be found, into his administration. Sadly, House of Commons does not, to put it gently, fully reflect the number of MPs.

Lord Simon is not only decent and honest; he is also an impressively able man, whose commitment to the concept of the single European market, from the point of view of someone who has run a successful international business, is a valuable asset to the Government. On balance, taking into account the moderate caveat that no one has voted for him, his appointment as a minister was to be welcomed.

But... there are some serious buts. What a mess Mr Blair has made of this appointment. The botched handling of Lord Simon's translation to ministerial

office is not a trivial matter. Nor is it "synthetic twaddle motivated by spite from the Opposition", as Mr Mandelson charged yesterday, although John Redwood has certainly used the issue to show off the opposition skills he honed during his internal exile. Mr Blair knows how important it is, which is why Mr Mandelson, Minister for Explaining the Higher Mysteries of New Labour, was put up on the *Today* programme.

Immediately after the election, Sir David became minister for competitiveness and the single market at the Department of Trade and Industry, resigned as £874,000-a-year chairman of BP and took the title Baron Simon of Highbury and Canonbury (the posh bits of Islington, for those benighted folk who live outside Blair-land). But no one seems to have thought about his £2m shareholding in BP.

Mr Blair, his advisers and officials had many pressing matters to attend to at the time. But it should have been obvious, to a party that had spent much of the previous 18 years attacking the "gravy train" of politicians leaving high office for lucrative boardrooms, that there were dangers inherent in traffic in the opposite direction, from business to government. Lord Simon's own character is irrelevant: the appearance of a potential conflict of interest should have been avoided. As a minister, Lord Simon is responsible for a range of policies that could affect - mostly indirectly

- the profitability of his former company. Questions of Procedure for Ministers required ministers to dispose of investments "if it seems likely that any of them might give rise to an actual or apparent conflict of interest". However, Lord Simon did not dispose of his BP shares. All he did was say that he would put his non-BP shares in a "blind trust" (which he did not get round to doing until after Margaret Beckett told the House of Commons it had already been done). Having overlooked the potential problem and been found out, the new government responded just like the old one,

with an unattractive combination of defensiveness, self-righteousness and injured innocence. This week's defence of its inaction is most unconvincing. Lord Simon could not have "disposed" of his BP shares because he might have been accused of profiting from inside knowledge about how the company's profits were about to plummet, according to the synchronised spinning of Blair, Mandelson and Beckett. Besides, said Mr Mandelson, what about Michael Heseltine and Paul Channon? Well, they are beside the point, because Labour ministers are supposed to be better than them.



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Why could Lord Simon not have put all his shares into a blind trust? An independent trustee could have been empowered to dispose of them whenever he or she, without inside knowledge of the company, thought best. This point should not be swept aside so dismissively by Mr Blair and his ministers.

What is least attractive about the Government's behaviour, however, is that the Prime Minister has responded to the Opposition's "vile and scurrilous" campaign by rewriting the rules for ministerial conduct. The new code, published yesterday to replace Questions of Procedure, waters down the absolute requirement to dispose of shares in cases of doubt. In what will become known as the Simon Clause, ministers may now, after submitting their case to the Prime Minister, "take alternative steps" to prevent an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Mr Mandelson (a veritable Lewis Carroll, he) described the new rules as "tighter" than the old ones, and claimed they were "going to make life harder for ministers".

forces", the latest management jargon. Their roles are advisory rather than executive, but, again, the avoidance of the appearance of a conflict of interest must be the absolute rule.

The pledge to clean up ethical standards in public life was central to Labour's promise on coming into office. Mr Blair rightly hammered away at the issue of sleaze. It was one of the anvils on which John Major's government was broken, and it is vitally important now that Labour should be holier than they.

No place for a Mir female

On Wednesday, NASA paraded Wendy Lawrence at a news conference and announced she would be the next astronaut to join the Mir space station. Yesterday, they said a man would be going instead. Excuses they could have made: 1) She's got some important cookies to bake. 2) The men would have to put the too seat down. 3) She might pull out the wrong cable. But, no, they chose 4) "She is too short." And the Russians then revealed that even shorter Russian men have used their one-size-fits-all spacesuits. NASA's cack-handedness shows that it still thinks rockets are for boys. If only Buzz Lightyear were a girl.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

End to point scoring at funerals

Sir: Every time there is a feature on death a letter follows from the Humanist Association advising the quality of humanist funerals (Letters, 28 July). I see no reason, however, why the deprecation of the "quasi-religious" funerals which I take it that people like me are alleged to offer, should go unchallenged. It is simply not true that it is only humanist funerals which celebrate life. Nor is there any case for saying that Christian funerals are not in any real sense for the bereaved.

Every day parish clergy conduct thousands of funerals for all sorts of people across the country. A few of these will be impersonal and inappropriate, but most will be taken by clergy who have spent time listening carefully and skilfully to those arranging the funeral. In my experience such clergy are just as conscientious and compassionate as the humanists who long, for whatever reasons, to usurp them.

The enlightened social revolution to which Nigel Collins (Letters, 28 July) looks forward in this area would be much more attractive to me if the humanists dropped their tired old point scoring. Death and its rituals are a complex and sensitive subject. It is easy for those involved to get something wrong.

What is needed is an open dialogue between all those involved in, to use my language, ministering to the bereaved, which will improve the quality, dignity and significance of the personal care and public ritual which surround death in our complex society.

The Rev Dr STEPHEN CHERRY
Loughborough

Sir: Thank you, Glenda Cooper ("The British way of death", 26 July), for trying to cheer us up about death. But it won't work. No amount of flowers or pretty woodland graves can alter the solemn reality: death is inevitable and death is final, and most of us are frightened of it.

One of the problems with death is that it makes us face the fact that much of what we spend our lives doing is futile. Money, power, pleasure - they all slip away from us as death approaches. So we don't talk about dying, and we try not to think about it.

The essence of religion is the preparation for death, and for the life beyond. Leave out God, and the futility of living and dying becomes almost unbearable. Don't tell me we're coping with death. We're just finding up-to-date ways of burying our heads in the sand.

HUGH J THOMSON
Birmingham

Sir: May I agree with your correspondent, the Rev Simon J Reed (Letters, 30 July), that many ministers of religion do render true and rewarding funerals.

That some ministers do not is evidenced by the comments heard by humanist officials, such as myself. Stories of families hurt by the blithe assurance and production line techniques of ministers come from many families that we visit.

The Rev Reed states "Humanists naturally have their own reasons for putting out a message that religious services are no good." No, that would be counter-productive and is not what Nigel Collins (Letters, 28 July) was saying and the reason is this.



Those that take humanist funerals are volunteers, as opposed to the salaried ministers of religion. All requests are referred directly by families and funeral directors that have witnessed our work. We do not advertise, yet the number of requests is increasing at more than 15 per cent per annum. A mighty social change is in progress and rather than being promoted by the humanists, it is at the direct request of the public.

SIMON CALLEN
Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire

Sir: Instead of disputing the good and bad aspects of religious or non-religious funerals (Letters, 28 and 30 July), why not discuss the bad aspects of any kind of funeral? Glenda Cooper's original complaint about the lack of significance of so many of them missed the point that many people feel the disposal of a dead body to be an inappropriate place for ritual and find most funerals to be both embarrassing and expensive.

My own preference is for cremation or burial to be a private matter for only the closest friends and relations, and for any public tribute to a dead person to take place at another time and place altogether; my suspicion is that this is a growing sentiment, and that funerals could decline along with weddings and christenings.

We are often told that man is a ritualistic animal, just as we used to be told that man is a religious animal; but the fact is that many men and women are neither, and we need no formal process to part with the dead any more than to join lovers or to greet children.

NICOLAS WALTER
Nationalist Press Association
London N1

New Labour in Europe

Sir: Roy Hattersley, as a long-standing Labour Party member, is concerned about growing inequality and this government's lack of commitment to its amelioration ("Labour's mission is power, not the poor", 30 July).

He is right to be concerned about the state of this country. Inequality has grown faster here than in any OECD country. Per capita income in the poorer regions of the UK is half that of some EU regions on a par with subsistence peasant economies of parts of southern Europe.

Lord Dahrendorf has pointed out that many people in work in Britain are poorer than the unemployed in much of northern Europe. New Labour's notions of inclusiveness can only be theoretical in this context. South Korean inward investment in South Wales, lauded by William Hague when Secretary of State, produces manufacturing jobs paying half that of a German shop assistant - and this government seems to be continuing with these palliatives.

In addition they are reliant on public services vastly inferior to those of their German counterparts. With such a large proportion of the UK workforce on very low salaries the Government expects them to make private pension provision.

Throughout the EU the redistributive character of progressive income tax is accepted, together

with the state's responsibility to provide good-quality public services. Unfortunately, the policies we have been following are those of the US, which does not accept these values. The EU average for what the state absorbs of national GDP is 50 per cent; it is 30 per cent in the US, while in the UK it is 40 per cent, falling to 38 per cent over the next two years.

I applaud the Government's stance that good-quality education be put at the top of the political agenda but this can reduce inequality only in the very long term. I also recognise that the British public is not yet psychologically prepared to accept higher tax rates. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of government to lead public opinion, not to follow it.

General de Gaulle said that the British were not Europeans. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown will have to decide whether in fact we are.

SIMON BRANDENBURGER
London SW6

Sir: Roy Hattersley spends a fraction of his article discussing the minimum wage, for which the Government is seriously preparing.

What does this tell us of Old Labour's priorities? They do not wish to face or achieve real change. They believe in the redistribution of money but what we need to achieve in quite large part is a new distribution of jobs and the wages that go with them.

DAVID KINNESELEY
Chesham, Buckinghamshire

Iraqis killed by sanctions

Sir: I applaud your publicity of the outrage of continued British arms sales to Indonesia. May I highlight another issue, at least as serious which is receiving little attention and to which the "ethical" foreign policy of New Labour should be addressed. I refer to the continued economic sanctions on Iraq. This is a particular responsibility of Britain as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

At the beginning of August the sanctions, imposed six months before the start of the 1991 Gulf war, will have existed for a full seven years. The facts, derived mainly from UN sources, are not in dispute. The World Food Programme reported in 1995 that four million people, a fifth of Iraq's population, were starving because of sanctions. Unicef reported in 1997 that under-five mortality was 5,600 a month and rising.

Ramsay Clark, the former US Attorney General, estimates that sanctions have so far killed more than 1.5 million innocent civilians, including 750,000 children. Madeleine Albright, now US Secretary of State, agreed (CBS 60 Minutes, 12 May, 1996) that sanctions had by then killed 500,000 children. She said: "We think the price is worth it", in support of US policy.

The UN Genocide Convention condemns "deliberately inflicting

on a group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part". The Protocol 1 Addition (1977) to the Geneva Convention declares that the "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited".

It is easy to demonstrate, from UN documents themselves, that the so-called "food for oil" SC resolution 986 is totally inadequate as a means of addressing the years-long suffering of the Iraqi people. It cannot be right to inflict genocide on an entire generation of Iraqi children as a way of punishing the tyrant under whom they are forced to live.

GEOFF SIMONS
Stockport, Cheshire
The writer is author of "The Scourging of Iraq" (1996)

Advertising Gallic flair

Sir: John Lichfield, your Paris correspondent, says the caption "Freedom of expression begins on the walls" accompanying the poster showing a detail of a mural from the ruins of Pompeii is a "rather pompous slogan" ("French confront the admen's naked truth", 31 July).

A better (and more accurate translation) of the caption is "freedom of expression was born on the walls" and shows that the use of a very ancient mural in support of the use of sexual imagery in modern advertising is a near - and hardly pompous - example of Gallic flair and deftness.

MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS
London W6

Cycling on a summer holiday

Sir: Perhaps the reason Emma Houghton and her family don't enjoy their holidays together ("Oh no! Not a holiday!", 30 July) is their chosen mode of transport?

Stick four people in a car for more than a few hours and they are bound to get sick of each other. And even if the drive is short and the holiday base is a fixed one, kids need constant entertainment. Granted, not an easy task, so here's a suggestion for Emma and family: next year go on a cycle holiday.

The scenery changes every day, the speed of travel allows you to unwind, and cycling on traffic-free trails is safe. Kids love the independence cycling gives them and they're so puffed out by the end of the day they collapse into bed, hungry for the next day of exploration.

The ever-increasing number of companies offering cycle holidays is testament to the appeal. Another big advantage? You can pig out and not put on a pound. Cycling burns off all those calorie-laden holiday goodies.

CARLTON REID
"On Your Bike"
The family cycling magazine
Throckley, Tyne and Wear

Work fatalities need legislation

Sir: To describe a 20 per cent increase in the number of fatalities at work this year as a "rather tragic blip", in the words of Jenny Bacon, the director-general of the Health and Safety Executive, defies credulity. This is the largest single annual increase, since the passing of the Health and Safety at Work Act in 1974. As the figures are provisional only, on past experience they will almost certainly rise further.

Critics of the previous Conservative administration have long argued that such a rise would be inevitable as the ideal of responsible self-regulation of workplace safety was supplanted by the crude economic imperatives of doctrinaire deregulation. It is time for New Labour to consider the enactment of a comprehensive new Safety and Health in the Workplace Act.

This would replace a law that is currently so clearly failing in its key objectives and that takes no account of the changes in employer power over the past two decades.

Dr CHARLES WOOLFSON
Deputy Convenor
Centre for Regulatory Studies
University of Glasgow
Glasgow

Dyeing for a new hairdo

Sir: No great surprise that Elizabeth Taylor is not dyeing her hair after an operation to remove a brain tumour (Tabloid: "Grey matter: how Liz grew up", 31 July).

I too had such an operation and was told never to have my hair dyed or even tinted. Why? Because these chemicals penetrate and seep through the skull and can cause severe problems. Such information is not openly declared by the hairdressing industry; for obvious reasons.

Elizabeth Taylor will stay white-haired for the rest of her life. Mrs S P THEINER
Ipswich

America, land of the large

After two years of reporting from France, Mary Dejevsky is now covering the United States. She expected differences, but found that the two cultures are polar opposites

The day I arrived in Washington this spring was the day a rap artist who styled himself "The Notorious B.I.G." was murdered, in a type of killing that is sufficiently common here to be known as a "drive-by shooting". The death of the man acknowledged to be leader of the "East Coast rap faction", and author of certain especially aggressive lyrics, prompted much comment about those who live by the gun dying by the gun.

For me, though, B.I.G. had other connotations. I was just embarking on what must be one of the more startling cultural transitions in the Western world. From introducing myself "Bonjour, Madame, Monsieur" [nod to both, eyes demurely lowered], *permettez-vous*... etc, etc, I was learning the eyes wide, smile also, upfront American way: "Hi, I'm Mary, who are you?"

As a rapper, B.I.G. may have aspired to iconoclasm, but his chosen name seemed all-American, a testament to the cult of BIGNess and self-advertisement. In France, where I had spent the previous two years, small is mostly positive, and discretion is a virtue. *Petit(e)* is a term of approval, endearment. Attached to any noun, from proper name to food item, it puts everyone in a good mood. "Big" tends to denote - aside from remote

grandeur - crudeness, grossness, clumsiness.

The French doubtless find their prejudice amply borne out on the streets of urban America. It is not only the cars; we Europeans have long been familiar with giant American gas-guzzlers. Nor is it the way they are driven, though the traffic alternates the somnolent with the brash.

It is that the general artlessness evident on the roads extends to the pavements, the pedestrians, the shops and a great deal else besides. Take the pavements. In French cities there is an unwritten rule: pedestrians keep to the right. The busier the street, the more rigid the rule. Collisions are rare. Americans bump into you all the time, with a cheerful "excuse me" if you are lucky. I am still unsure whether their reluctance to change direction is part of a survival-of-the-fittest, who-blinks-first mindset, a lack of practice in city walking, or simply inattention.

You seem more likely to be mown down on a Washington pavement (by a Rollerblader, cyclist, runner or "power-walker") than on the road. In a car you can get away with running through a red light, but failing to stop for a pedestrian at a corner must attract a penalty only just short of execution, so strictly is it observed.

The cult of bigness, moreover, degrades two of the

greatest pleasures of the Gallic world: shopping and eating. Try shopping, cooking - even eating - for one, even two (Europeans) in the US. All right, so the fridge and freezer are big enough to accommodate any volume of leftovers. But what do you do with two-thirds of a giant packet of taco chips if there are just two of you? Or the giant pot of mayonnaise, if you have no school-age children needing packed lunches?

The only smaller packs you can find are super-luxury embellished or imported versions at twice the price of the huge one. A recent survey found that around 40 per cent of food bought in the US goes to waste. It is not surprising, but it is hard also not to see the hand of profit at work.

The more positive explanation would be the continual American craving for what is new and different - the dynamo of US inventiveness. The plain taco chip may be good enough for Mexicans, but not for Americans. The humble bagel, once consumed plain or with cream cheese - and smoked salmon on special occasions - now rivals the over-sugared, over-iced, over-filled doughnut in its ability to re-create itself. The apple strudel bagel, advertised on my route to work risks clashing the circle: bagel or doughnut? What's the difference?

How different from France,

where innovative chefs find themselves pilloried for introducing a kiwi fruit where it is deemed not to belong, and where the art of cooking is an eternal quest for the perfect *steak frites*, *magret de canard* or *crème caramel*. And while size has a place - nouvelle cuisine was never the excuse for meanness in France that it became elsewhere - judgements of value in the French-speaking world are made not on size alone. They rest on a "bon rapport qualité/prix" with its assumption that quality and price should be (and they mostly are) related.

A French shopper might well dismiss as too cheap to be good an American-size pack of meat or biscuits. In France, it is common wisdom that the supermarket cake is quite a different creature from that of the specialist *pâtisseries*. You choose according to your purse and your preference. Americans, with rare exceptions, buy on price, even if it entails motoring for miles - though driving is not nearly as cheap as the pump price of petrol suggests, because American cars are significantly thirstier than their European counterparts.

Sheets of grocery coupons, a discounting method that has almost died out in Europe, are still a part of American life. Social workers teach "welfare

mothers" how to use them, but the better-off also snip them out, to get their due from the traders. Maybe I am profligate with my cents, but I find the cost/benefit ratio of the coupons unconvincing.

My non-participation in the coupon game is a small jab of rebellion against a system in which you are nothing but a consumer statistic. To my slightly abashed surprise, however, it turned out recently that there are others. An American columnist, Michael Lewis, recently boasted of being perhaps the only American ever to have paid list price for a new car. He said it was because he liked the unsalesmanlike salesman and found haggling demeaning. He wanted to apply the same principle to his shopping generally, and to campaign for what he called "new enlightened buying".

Lewis, in fact, is not as rare as he thinks; he is just un-American. There are millions of his "new enlightened buyers" in the world, many of them French, and their priorities are long established. For them, the seller/buyer relationship and the quality/price ratio are reasons for deciding where and what to buy. For those with the means to choose (and for some without), price is just one consideration.

The Americans and the French offer dozens of such cultural contrasts. Americans

have a degree of probity, still, in public life, which the French can hardly imagine; the French have patronage. Americans have a truly admirable sense of individual responsibility and of their part in the collective. They clear up after themselves at McDonald's, they volunteer for good works, and they perform song-and-dance routines with a precision that puts many of the world's armies to shame.

You have only to see a French dance troupe's best efforts at synchronisation to appreciate the culture gap. As a US conductor happily based in France recollected, he got his (professional) orchestra to play together only when he stopped drilling them and inspired them with his "vision" instead. They all started playing as one, each individually won over as to the rightness of his interpretation.

I will have to pass over the American/French difference in what the Americans have learnt, with awkward political correctness, to call "gender relations", as too vast an area to be tackled here. Suffice it to say that there are two poles of expectation, two poles of behaviour. For a woman, switching between the two cultures as they have developed in the Nineties is not easy; for a man it is probably harder still.

Such conclusions may seem little more than random anecdotes gathered to reinforce primitive and largely familiar

cultural stereotypes: the Anglo-Saxons vs the Gauls, Northern Europe vs the Mediterranean, predominantly Protestant cultures vs predominantly Catholic ones. That would be a valid objection if this cultural divide were narrowing; but in fact it threatens to become an ever-greater source of discord into the next century.

Over 200 years, cultural differences have taken the Americans and the French from revolutionary alliance into fierce, if uneven, rivalry. Theirs is now one of the most fraught and competitive diplomatic relationships of the post-Cold War world. If there are two ways of tackling and resolving one question, you can guarantee that the Americans will choose one and the French the other. From nuclear testing to Africa, from participation in international organisations to methods of aid-giving, from welfare to commerce, France and the US judge their priorities differently.

A pale reflection of this fundamental difference in mentality can be seen in Canada, though the more European style and outlook of Canada's English-speakers probably makes for less of a clash than there would be if Quebec were a part of the United States. It may also explain why Quebec has been able to retain its distinctiveness for so long.


But aspects of this cultural difference also exist, increasingly, within the US itself. The growing Hispanic community, with its language, Catholicism and Mediterranean ways, presents a cultural challenge to the US unlike any it has met before. The Latinos lack the "discretion" of the French, but share many of their values; and their brash energy makes them more equal competitors with America's declining proportion of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

Elements of a similar system of values can also be found among those American blacks who benefited from the civil rights movement but have not been fully assimilated or made their way in white society. In and around Washington DC, which is more of a southern town than it is often given credit for, it is invariably blacks who display the manners, civility, and humane flexibility with respect to rules that is such a characteristic of the Gallic world.

Any number of theories can be advanced to explain why, from the harshness of historical experience, via later urbanisation, to the existence of a more laid-back "southern" mentality. Many, however - especially whites - would deny such a difference exists, as though blacks are simply whites in waiting.

My sense is that there are real cultural differences here and that these are similar, in depth and in character, to the ones that cause the constant non-comprehension between America and France. Can it be that numbers of American blacks are as impervious to many aspects of "American" culture as are the French? Do they reject it for similar reasons - as lacking civility and flexibility, for a start? And could white America's big mistake, as with its attitude to France, be to act as though this cultural divide did not exist?





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Darling, your body's so evenly matched

"Hi, my name's David. Can I buy you a drink? I may look pretty ordinary with my clothes on, but underneath baby, I'm... symmetrical." At this point any rational woman should sit herself down, smile and begin to plan where the reception will be held. She now knows all that is necessary - for something called "body symmetry" is not only a pleasing thing to the eye, but a crucial indicator of the intelligence, reproductive ability and even the love-making skills of any man.

This is why, a few days ago, a Dr John Manning of Liverpool University announced yet another study - this one funded by the hugely important Wellcome Trust - into the role of "cyclical asymmetry" on hormonal changes. Dr Manning already knows enough to assert that animals that are very symmetrical "live longer, run faster and are more attractive to the opposite sex". And this is not just because a dog, say, with legs only on one side of its body has difficulty keeping up with the pack, or balancing itself during copulation. It is actually



David Aaronovitch

down to the correlation between symmetry and healthy genes.

At this point I call upon the expertise of Professor Randy Thornhill of the University of New Mexico. Professor Thornhill, or Randy, as I shall call him, measured the fingers, wrists, elbows, ankles and feet of 250 New Mexican students (not to be confused with New Mexican students). What he discovered was that the more "symmetrical" men had more sexual partners and gave their lovers more orgasms. Symms invoked dioxines 75 per cent of the time (while making love, I presume), whereas asymmetricals managed a hit rate of only 30 per cent. I suspect that many New Mexican women students have been wondering how they have only ever managed to sleep with asymmetrical males. And, as if this wasn't enough, Randy also found out that symms actually produced more sperm than asymms.

It is true that much of the evidence from the animal kingdom comes from a study of the Japanese scorpion fly, where the female is attracted to the male with the most

handled things badly begin to go all lopsided, while those with better genes do not.

This is, in many ways, rather counter-intuitive (if not unwelcome). Symmetry, as I understand it, means to be exactly the same on the left-hand side as on the right, except mirrored (it wouldn't be symmetrical to have two identical left-hand sides of one's body tacked together, with a bit of liver, say, resting on a hip). Symmetry doesn't mean, either, to be the same above the waist as below. Unless one was being scrutinised by something sitting on a vertical plane.

But if this is genuinely the test, then you could be a stick insect look-alike, or a steatopygous rhino type, and still be immensely attractive - just so long as you were exactly as skinny or obese on one side as on the other. In fact a big, fat, totally symmetrical bloke could be considered more beautiful than Michelangelo's *David*, who is - in one tiny but crucial respect - lopsided.

So I predict that when this unexpected message finally sinks in, there are going to be some fairly profound consequences. Cosmetic

surgery will stop being about bulk and reduction, and become a matter of injecting new balance. "Bigger, smaller, who cares? Just make 'em the same!" customers will cry. Size really won't matter, but bend certainly will. Men, when asked on which side they dress, will indignantly tell their tailors that it "hangs straight down the middle", and Turkish drop-crotch trousers will be very much in vogue. New-born babies will be scrutinised for signs of differential droop; insurance companies will ask prospective policy-holders for measurements of symmetry or degrees of deviation, and actors will never, ever claim that this is their "good side".

Culture, too, will change. We will hear no more the old La Rochefoucauld saw about true beauty being flawed. Instead Jackie Collins novels will record intimate and passionate discussions, including lines such as "Darling, darling I love your wrists. They're so similar," and, "Your breasts are perfect. I've just weighed them and they're exactly 2.75 kilos each."

سكنا من الاصل

Labour's brave new world takes shape

City pleased with appointments of Clementi and King

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The Government announced the appointment of two new deputy governors to the Bank of England yesterday, pleasing the financial markets with its choice of a prominent investment banker and the Bank's highly respected chief economist.

David Clementi, leaving his job as vice-chairman of Kleinwort Benson, and Mervyn King, architect of the Bank's quarterly Inflation Report, were widely seen as likely to be tough on inflation and independent-minded.

Mr Clementi's appointment as deputy to Governor Eddie George was leaked last weekend and was revealed by Dresdner Bank. Kleinwort Benson's parent, when it reported its results this week. However, the Government's decision to name Professor King for the other deputy governorship, which will be created in the autumn by the new Bank of England Act, came as a surprise.

His elevation was viewed positively by many City economists. "He is the best choice they could have made," said David Mackie at JP Morgan. Professor King is seen as a leading candidate to become the next Governor of the Bank if the Government decides not to renew Mr George's contract next year.

Professor King joined the Bank as its chief economist in 1990 from the London School of Economics. His academic reputation had been cemented by his research on taxation, which helped shape the simplification of income tax and the use of the tax system to encourage saving.

He has played a crucial role in creating the inflation target framework for monetary policy and in restoring

credibility after the fiasco of "Black Wednesday" when the pound dropped out of the exchange rate mechanism.

Professor King's presentation of the quarterly Inflation Report has helped carve him a high profile. He is seen as too hawkish by some commentators and has a reputation for not suffering fools gladly.

Mr Clementi's views about inflation and interest rate policy are unknown, but analysts were reassured by his prominence in the Conservatives' privatisation programme. He joined Kleinwort Benson in 1975, having qualified as an accountant at Arthur Andersen. As joint head of the bank's corporate finance division from 1989, he is credited with having rescued the privatisation of the electricity industry from disaster. He was also involved in the British Gas and Cable & Wireless sell-offs.

Professor King will have responsibility for monetary stability and the inflation target, while Mr Clementi will be responsible for financial stability and the running of the Bank of England. The appointments were part of Gordon Brown's reshaping of the Bank of England and of financial regulation. The deputy governors' salaries will be similar to the £184,083 Mr Davies received last year.

Both deputy governors will join Eddie George on the monetary policy committee, which votes on the level of interest rates each month. Two other executive directors of the Bank, Ian Plenderleith and whoever replaces Mr King as chief economist, also have places on the committee, alongside four outside experts nominated by the Chancellor. On balance, the committee is expected to nudge interest rates up by about a quarter point to 7 per cent next Thursday.

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The Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, congratulates David Clementi (centre) and Mervyn King (right) on their appointments outside No 10 Downing Street

Photograph: Reuters

Davies pushes forward timetable for super-SIB

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

The creation of a powerful City regulator is to be pushed through more quickly than expected by Howard Davies, who takes over today as chairman of the Securities and Investments Board. It is hoped the accelerated introduction of the proposed mega-regulator, widely known as the super-SIB, will minimise the risk of ineffective regulation during an extended transition from the existing two-tier system of financial supervision.

According to Mr Davies, who was until yesterday the Bank of England's deputy governor, the new structure will be broadly in place by next spring when responsibility for banking supervision is transferred from the Bank.

Mr Davies, a former foreign office high flyer whose career has included spells at management consultant McKinsey and as director general of the Confederation of British Industry, said one of his first tasks would be to appoint a transitional management team. He said heads of front-line regulators such as the Securities and Futures Authority and the Personal Investment Authority would have "first crack" at the new jobs.

Other priority issues would include sorting out a *modus operandi* with the Bank of England, from which the super-SIB plans to take more than 500 banking supervision staff and with which it will need to work closely on matters relating to the stability of the financial system as a whole.

Mr Davies will also look closely at the level of practitioner involvement in the new regulatory structure and at how the super-SIB will be funded. With an estimated 2,000 staff, the new regulator is expected to have

an annual budget of around £200m, but Mr Davies promised the costs of regulation would be "proportionate to the benefits".

He has also shortlisted several buildings in which to house the expanded regulator. With a requirement for at least 300,000 sq ft, speculation has grown that the super-SIB may have to locate in London's Docklands but the Corporation of London is sure to fight hard to retain such a high-profile tenant in the City itself.

Outlining the structure and timetable in a submission to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, Mr Davies warned that a major focus of the supervisor would be on the high levels of remuneration in the City.

In an interview to be broadcast on LWT's *London Programme* this Sunday, Mr Davies will say: "What we are interested in is the incentives that are created by remuneration structures. The danger is that you generate a system which incentivises people to such a degree that they have a strong personal interest in taking risks with other people's money."

One of the key conclusions of the report to the Chancellor was a decision to adopt an organisation based on regulatory functions - policy, authorisation, investigation, consumer relations and supervision - rather than by type of institution. In order to capitalise on expertise, however, supervision will be further divided into units overseeing particular areas such as banking or insurance.

The new organisation, officially known as NewRO until a more meaningful acronym is agreed on, will not formally come into existence until 1999 when an updated Financial Services Act is expected to become effective.

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Daimler rejects overtures from BAe

Michael Harrison

The head of Daimler-Benz, the giant German aerospace and cars group, yesterday rejected plans being promoted by British Aerospace for the consolidation of Europe's defence and aircraft industry under a single holding company.

Jürgen Schrempp, the Daimler chairman, said he backed the creation of joint companies in specific sectors such as missiles and fighter aircraft. But he was dubious of the idea of forming a holding company to oversee the consolidation. "I want operating companies. I have problems with holding companies," he told a conference in London where Daimler was announcing first-half results.

Daimler is a partner of BAe on the Airbus civil aircraft programme and the Eurofighter project and at one stage discussed the idea of cross-shareholdings to create a united European defence and aerospace business. Mr Schrempp said it was even more vital now that Europe's defence industry consolidated following the merger of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas in the US.

The Daimler chairman said that without consolidation Europe's defence and aerospace industry would have "no chance against the Americans".

Daimler announced that first-half operating profits had more than doubled from DM800m (£265m) to DM1.8bn.

BT widens investigation into MCI's prospects

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

British Telecom's review into the business of its US partner, MCI, has become much wider than previously thought, the UK group indicated yesterday, as executives again refused to say whether they had the power to renegotiate the planned \$20bn (£1.2bn) merger.

But BT faced renewed criticism from analysts when it revealed much better than expected first-quarter profits. One analyst accused the company of "a blatant fiddle", by

temporarily slashing its redundancy costs.

Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, said the review would include all aspects of MCI's operations and of the merger terms themselves. BT launched the investigation a fortnight ago after MCI plunged the merger into jeopardy with a shock profits warning.

The US long-distance operator said losses this year from its drive into local phone markets would reach \$800m, double the level previously forecast. Sir Peter and BT's finance director, Robert Brace, have

recently returned from a fact-finding trip to MCI's Washington headquarters.

"The review is a wide review of the situation. The market place is changing rapidly.... We are looking at all aspects of the deal," said Sir Peter. Figures this week added to MCI's woes by showing a slowdown in growth from its main long-distance operation.

Sir Peter reiterated MCI's comments this week that the review would conclude in "weeks rather than months" and possibly by the end of August. BT's big shareholders

have demanded information much sooner.

But he would not be drawn on whether the merger agreement allowed BT to renegotiate the terms, short of pulling out altogether. "This is a complex agreement interpreted by lawyers," Sir Peter added.

Last night there was growing speculation among analysts that the merger terms included a secret clause specifically banning renegotiation on the grounds of a deterioration in MCI's local business. In a separate briefing Sir Peter would only say some clauses of the agreement were

"not public" and BT "has not publicised them".

Sir Peter also appeared to distance BT from MCI's bullish attack on the local market given by US executives this week. He said the "mutual review" would decide whether this strategy, which would raise investment substantially, was right. "Do they spend more, do they spend less?" said Sir Peter.

Responding to growing criticism from UK shareholders, Sir Peter admitted the events had dented the board's credibility. Asked whether British executives would be forced to resign,

he continued: "I am employed at the pleasure of the board and nobody is denying me that pleasure. But I'm not a quitter."

BT also ruled out raising its £2bn special dividend of 35p a share, to be paid in September before the merger goes ahead, as a way of reducing the price for MCI. Investors in the US group will be paid partly in BT shares, but the UK company's share price would drop after the dividend has been paid out. A higher dividend would reduce the value of BT shares to MCI investors. BT reported profits of £881m

between April and June, a 1.4 per cent increase on last year. But the figures were boosted by a drop in redundancy charges from £52m to £16m.

One analyst said last night: "They've been telling us the redundancy charge for this year will be about £200m. Prudence dictates they should be taking a charge of around £50m each quarter. But to continue with the bid for MCI they need to support the share price as much as possible by making the results look better than they really are."

BT shares closed at 426.5p, down 4p.

Roditi launches £31m bid for P&G

Magnus Grimond

Peace broke out yesterday between Plantation & General Investments and the Zimbabwean raiding party which hopes to turn this obscure African plantation company into the latest emerging market growth stock.

Nick Roditi, the fund manager linked with both George Soros and before that Lord (Jacob) Rothschild, has launched a £31.5m takeover bid for P&G after taking his stake to 43 per cent by picking up 14 per cent from his erstwhile adversary, Konrad Legg, the group's long-standing chairman. The offer came at the 11th hour to avert a showdown between the two sides at yesterday's annual meeting.

Mr Legg has been resisting attempts by Mr Roditi to have him removed and replaced by

Mr Roditi's friends, fellow Zimbabwean and former Bank of England deputy governor, Rupert Pennant-Rea, and Derek Nettleton, a one-time corporate financier at Schroders.

Now Mr Legg has agreed to go quietly, pocketing around £3.6m and keeping a stake of just under 3 per cent in the company. Selwyn Pryor, another director, is also retiring, with Messrs Pennant-Rea and Nettleton joining an otherwise unchanged board. The two newcomers pick up 500,000 options, exercisable at the 80p offer price.

The bid compares with an indicative offer of 58p a share made earlier this year by Roditi, Mr Roditi's vehicle for the takeover, which was dismissed as inadequate by the board.

The shares rose 1p to 82.5p yesterday.

Capital-Virgin referral to MMC stuns investors

Clifford German

Investors were stunned yesterday by a surprise referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission of Capital Radio's planned £6.5m acquisition of Richard Branson's Virgin FM.

The Government's decision came out of the blue, shortly after a ruling by the Radio Authority that the bid would not be against the public interest.

It took that decision after Capital Radio had given undertakings to ensure the news broadcasts on Virgin FM channel would be separately produced and presented, that the total amount of rock and related music on Virgin FM would be limited to 20 per cent, and any relaunch of Virgin FM would be delayed until Christmas 1997.

A joint statement from Capital Radio and Virgin last night said they continued to believe the proposed deal had no competitive implications. "We believe that these views will be endorsed by listeners and advertisers to the MMC," the statement said.

Capital's shares fell 31p to 475p, although they later recovered to close 15p down at 491p.

Capital has an estimated 42 per cent of the 9.8 million potential listeners in the London area and 62 per cent of the advertising spend, because of the preference of advertisers for the market leader and the higher charges Capital can levy for a given number of listeners. The addition of Virgin FM would give Capital 48.5 per

cent of London's listeners and in excess of 70 per cent of the advertising spend.

Capital and Virgin also justify their merger on national grounds. Capital has only 8.91 per cent of the radio ownership and Virgin 4.3 per cent, and between them they fall short of the 15 per cent ceiling imposed by the Broadcasting Act of 1990. Virgin has a national AM network, but Capital does not. Only by merging can they develop a digital AM channel to challenge BBC Radio in the national market.

Chris Parry chief executive of XFM, a station due to start broadcasting in September, said the decision to refer the merger would allow the MMC to give clear guidelines on fair competition.

Treasury ditches own PFI project

Michael Harrison

The Treasury yesterday abandoned one of the flagship projects in its Private Finance Initiative - the £200m refurbishment of its own headquarters in Whitehall.

Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, said negotiations with the Treasury's preferred bidder, Exchequer Partnership, had been terminated because ministers had decided they had other spending priorities and that the project might expose the Government to "significant financial risk".

A spokesman added that there were question marks over the commercial viability of the project, since Exchequer Part-

nership had not been able to sign up other tenants for the building once it had been refurbished. He also said that ministers had decided other PFI projects, such as schools and hospitals, were a "higher priority than a gleaming new building for Treasury staff".

However, observers expressed surprise that the project had been dropped, suggesting it could only harm the battered image of the PFI.

A spokesman for Exchequer Partnership, a consortium of Stanhope, Bovis and Hambros, said: "Obviously we are disappointed that the project is not going ahead. A lot of work had gone into it."

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STOCK MARKETS									
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Vol (m)	Dividend	Yield (%)	Price/Earnings
FTSE 100	4907.60	-19.70	-0.4	4964.20	4056.60	3.32			
FTSE 250	4492.00	+10.00	+0.2	4729.40	4395.20	3.69			
FTSE 350	2352.00	-6.80	-0.3	2373.70	2017.90	3.39			
FTSE SmallCap	2188.44	+2.49	+0.1	2374.20	2178.28	3.23			
FTSE All-Share	2295.18	-5.99	-0.3	2316.08	1989.78	3.38			
Asian Nikkei	8254.89	+0.00	+0.0	8254.89	5932.94	1.60			
Tokyo	20331.43	+118.61	+0.6	20681.07	17303.85	0.731			
Hong Kong	16365.71	+382.53	+2.4	16365.71	12055.17	2.791			
Frankfurt	4438.93	+17.21	+0.4	4438.93	2848.77	1.261			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	Money Market Rates
1 Month	2 Year	10 Year	3 Month	5 Year	10 Year	3 Month	5 Year	10 Year	3 Month
UK 6.87	7.50	6.94	7.00	6.98	7.96	US 5.58	5.84	6.03	6.81
US 5.58	5.84	6.03	6.81	6.32	6.94	Japan 0.50	0.69	2.11	3.33
Germany 3.09	3.47	5.54	6.34	6.19					

CURRENCIES									
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	DM/\$	DM/¥	¥/\$	£/A\$	£/NZ\$	£/HK\$	£/SG\$
1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07
1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07
1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07	1.36	157	1.07

DUNFERMLINE BUILDING SOCIETY									
New Borrowers Interest Rate									
From 1 August 1997, Dunfermline Building Society's variable mortgage rate for new mortgages for owner-occupiers will be 7.90% pa gross.									
Notice to Existing Borrowers									
From 1 August 1997, the Society's variable rates of interest for existing borrowers will be increased by 0.55% pa gross. For borrowers with fixed rate mortgages, this change will come into effect at the end of the fixed rate period.									
Borrowers on the budget repayment scheme are not required to take any action and individual notices will be issued to borrowers outwith the scheme.									
Dunfermline Building Society Caledonia House Carnegie Avenue Dunfermline KY11 5PA Tel 01383 527727 www.dunfermline-bs.co.uk									

Testing months ahead for super-SIB's chief



Howard Davies is plainly a man in a hurry, and with good reason. The greatest danger to the new unified regulator is that another Barings will show it to have taken its eye off the ball while it is still being inflated.

They are nervous of Howard Davies in the City, a fact he's secretly rather pleased about. He's an outsider, whose two years as deputy governor of the Bank of England give him only a passing acquaintance with the institutions he oversees from today as head of the beefed up Securities and Investments Board. He is also razor sharp, with a deceptively good grasp of the issues for someone who has had such little time to read his way in. That is just as well. Although better equipped than most for such a massive intellectual and managerial exercise, Mr Davies will need to draw deeply on his varied CV in the testing months ahead. None of the Foreign Office, Treasury, McKinsey, Audit Commission, CBI or Bank of England detained him for longer than six years on his reluctant rise through the establishment. He will need all that experience, especially the early lessons in diplomacy, if he is to get this one right.

Yesterday's interim report to the Chancellor on the proposed creation of the City's new mega-regulator - NewRO in the super-vision's charming official-speak - gave little away that had not already dribbled out. It was predictably long on good intentions and short on specifics.

What was apparent, however, was the speed with which super-SIB will come into being next spring, *de facto* if not by then *de jure*. Mr Davies is plainly a man in a hurry, and with good reason. The greatest danger to the new unified regulator is that another

Barings will show it to have taken its eye off the ball while it is still being inflated. That is even more the case for a single supervisor, which runs a serious risk of having its overall reputation muddled by a foul-up in one of its divisions.

The other potential headache for the new chairman lies in the scale of the unprecedented task of putting together nine diverse regulators that have grown up over the past 10 years or so with wholly different and possibly incompatible goals, remits and cultures. It is no coincidence that Mr Davies's first job will be to put in place a transitional management team - a successful super-SIB will be as much about the right people as the right structures.

Bank appointments should ease doubts

The announcement of the names of two new deputy governors at the Bank of England leaves one last thing for idle minds to speculate about. That is whether the Government will replace Eddie George when his term comes to an end next spring, and if so, who will step into his shoes.

Many people in the City would like to see Steady Eddie carry on. He is very much a banker's central banker, and would also ensure continuity at the Bank at a time of very radical change in its functions and organisation. However, the Government

has an eye on a wider audience than the banking community. It wants to make sure the Bank of England is broadly accountable and answers to the national economic interest, so City preferences as such little ice with Gordon Brown.

In addition, it sees Mr George's record as mixed, with a great improvement in the credibility of interest rate policy offset by doubts about the Bank's handling of the Barings crisis. Bank-Treasury relations are also unusually tense at the moment as a result of all the upheaval being inflicted on the one by the other.

The two names handed about as possible replacements for Mr George are Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist who was yesterday elevated to deputy governorship, and Gavin Davies, chief economist at Goldman Sachs and a columnist for *The Independent*. Both are known to want the job. Mr Davies is a friend of Gordon Brown, which some commentators think gives him the edge and others reckon puts him at a disadvantage.

The markets would undoubtedly prefer the inside candidate, especially one with such purist views on the need for price stability. The Chancellor, on his past record, would probably like to spring a surprise.

However, yesterday's announcement should reassure anybody who doubted Mr Brown's intentions towards the Bank. The delight of those who welcomed his move to make the Bank independent was tempered

by a suspicion that he would water down that independence through the appointments he needed to make. The two deputy governors named yesterday, like the outside experts on the Monetary Policy Committee, should set such suspicions to rest.

Shades of a Whitehall farce in PFI decision

The last day of Parliament is the traditional occasion on which to sneak out awkward government announcements and few fit the bill more exquisitely than the Chancellor's decision to abandon the refurbishment of Treasury HQ as part of the Private Finance Initiative.

Since this was one of the flagships of the PFI, the decision looks odd. It looks doubly strange since Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, has invested a good deal of his political capital promising to put the PFI back on track.

How the decision will play with the private sector partners Labour is so keen to cuddle up with as a means of saving on public expenditure remains to be seen. But taking nearly two years to select a preferred bidder, and then signing a heads of agreement only to terminate negotiations on the spot is hardly a ringing endorsement for Labour's attempt to portray itself as the natural party of business.

The fact that the heads of agreement was

signed by the previous incumbent at Number 11 and the fact that no contract had actually been signed by his successor is unlikely to cut much ice.

The official line is that there were other more worthy PFI projects than tarring up the Treasury at this time of tight spending controls, etc etc, even though there is no shortage of money for PFI projects and, in any case, the financing is off-balance sheet for the Government - that being the whole point of the exercise.

The unauthorised version is that the Treasury has been caught with its pants down in a classic Whitehall farce. The refurbishment would have obliged the Treasury mandarins to move out for at least two years, possibly to an ageing office block south of the Thames in Vauxhall. When it moved back in it would have had to share its new accommodation with the Foreign Office, to make the project cost effective.

That in turn would have entailed the FCO finding tenants for its vacated property by Admiralty Arch, not to mention forcing Robin Cook to give up his grace and favour flat and move in with Gordon Brown. While we can only speculate on the personality clashes, we can be sure that the FCO would have been left with a financial headache.

Still it is one less project that the Treasury's new PFI supremo, Adrian Montague, will have to worry about when he arrives later this month from Kleinwort Benson. Welcome to Whitehall, Mr Montague.

Dealers run out of R-reg cars as sales hit record

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Building society windfalls and the post-election surge in consumer confidence look set to push new car sales this month to a record of more than 500,000, beating the previous peak set in 1989.

But customers hoping to take delivery of some R-registration models this month could be disappointed.

Dealers yesterday reported that stockpiles of some ranges, including Audi and BMW, had already run out. Other models in short supply were the Peugeot 406 range and the evergreen Mazda MX5 sports cars.

An Audi spokeswoman pre-

dicted 7,500 registrations this month, a 7 per cent rise from last year. "We are a demand-led company and supply constrained. You might be able to walk into the odd dealer and still get an Audi for August, but most of our allocation has already gone."

Martin Austin, managing director of Corby Motors, a large Northampton-based dealer chain, said that in each dealership at least one model range had sold out. "It is partly because manufacturers have cut production rather too far, and have been slightly caught out."

Car market experts yesterday forecast sales would rise 9 per cent over August last year from 479,407 to 520,000. The only

time sales have broken through the 500,000 barrier was during the last boom in 1989, with 500,112 registrations.

Despite the predicted improvement this month, sales for 1997 as a whole are still unlikely to match the record of 2.3 million set eight years ago.

Jay Nagley, from consultancy group Quadangle, explained: "This August will heavily depend on what targets Ford and Vauxhall set themselves, because they have tended to let their market share drop. But with all the building society windfalls people have received we would be a bit disappointed if this wasn't a record month."

But Lex, one of the largest dealerships, said most windfall money was going on used cars: "People are spending the cash in the used car market which is pushing used values up generally. This in turn has enabled other consumers to trade up and buy new."

Dealers also pointed to increasing economic optimism driving the top end of the car market. Stratstone, a Porsche, Aston Martin and Ferrari dealership in the Cheshire commuter belt, reported a 20 per cent rise in pre-booked R-registration sales.

The 44 cars due for delivery this month, 36 of which were Porsches, cost £3.3m.

Long-term market trends also pointed to a bumper August. Since the 1980s, August has taken a steadily larger share of annual registrations, much to the despair of the car makers.

August 1988 represented 21.5 per cent of the year's sales, whereas by 1995 it had risen to 24.1 per cent.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders recently urged the new Government to adopt a twice-yearly number-plate change to smooth sales volumes.

If the plan goes ahead, this August frenzy would be the last.



Before the flood: Some of the 60,000 imported cars waiting for the R-registration rush at Royal Portbury Dock, Avonmouth

Photograph: Tom Pilstow

Chris Godsmark

Toyota, the Japanese car giant, could bring forward a decision on whether to locate a second European car plant in Britain, executives indicated yesterday, as the company pledged to intensify its sales assault across the Continent.

Iwao Okijima, executive vice-president, would give no clue as to whether the UK was on the shortlist. But he revealed that more than 30 sites had "extended" invitations to the com-

Early decision promised on site of new Toyota plant

pany, including several from Eastern Europe. Another site under consideration is believed to be in Northern France.

"We have not made any decisions," said Mr Okijima. "We will come to a final conclusion by the middle of next year. However, we would very much

like to bring forward the date of the decision and we are working hard to do so."

Before the UK election Toyota warned that the previous government's scepticism towards closer European integration could deter the group from adding to its British manufac-

turing operations. It recently approved the expansion of its only European car-making plant, at Burnaston in Derbyshire, to 220,000 cars annually, to build a second model range.

Capacity at its engine factory on Decade is also being expanded to 200,000.

Mr Okijima said political considerations were just one of several factors. "Toyota has had a very favourable relationship with the previous government and we hope this relationship with the new Labour government will continue." Managers praised efficiency strides at Burnaston, but said productivity was still 10 per cent below Japan.

Toyota predicted it would sell 450,000 cars in Europe this year, with sales in the first six months running 11 per cent ahead of 1996.

Volvo sells stake in Renault for £450m

Volvo yesterday took the final step in its long-running divorce from Renault, by selling all its remaining stake in the French car maker for £450m.

Though the share sale had been expected, the Swedish group said the timing was dictated by the recent surge in Renault's share price. Volvo sold the 11.38 per cent shareholding to UBS, the Swiss banking group, for 750m Swedish kronor (£453m), which compares with the stake's book value of £38m.

Leif Johansson, Volvo's president, said the move confirmed the strategy taken by the group's new management since merger talks between the two companies collapsed four years ago. "We decided to take advantage of the rise in the price of the Renault share during 1997, which has been even more pronounced during the past week," Renault shares have risen by more than 40 per cent since the start of the year.

Volvo's long-running links with Renault, which has supplied the Swedish company with engines and other components since the 1970s, culminated in the merger proposals at the end of 1993. The announcement prompted an unprecedented public outcry in Sweden and a shareholder revolt, which led to the resignation of the entire Volvo board, including Pehr Gyllenhammar, the chief executive, weeks later.

Since then the new executive team has steadily reduced Volvo's shareholdings in other businesses, including food and drinks companies, to concentrate on car and lorry manufacturing. Yesterday's sale left just one remaining outside stake, in the drugs empire Pharmacia & Upjohn.

Volvo has also attempted to transform its conservative image, launching sports versions of its saloon range and a new smaller car, which have been well received. Analysts also said the cash raised could be ploughed into acquisitions in Volvo's truck business.

Long-term market trends also pointed to a bumper August. Since the 1980s, August has taken a steadily larger share of annual registrations, much to the despair of the car makers.

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If the plan goes ahead, this August frenzy would be the last.

Hang Seng grabs sixth slot in world markets

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's stock market capitalisation has increased by 58 per cent in the past year - more than any other market - according to figures released yesterday by the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

This leaves Hong Kong as the world's sixth-largest market, up from the eighth place it occupied a year ago. At the end of June, capitalisation stood at HK\$347.9bn (£27.6bn).

Some of the first five largest markets remained unchanged with New York leading the way, followed by Tokyo, London, Frankfurt and Paris. Although the London market was the fastest-growing of the top five, registering a 36 per cent rise in market capitalisation, its rate of growth was below the increase seen in Hong Kong.

The growth in market listings

is matched by something of a bull run in the territory. Yet again yesterday the Hong Kong market hit a new high with the Hang Seng Index closing at 16,365, a one day gain of 2.4 per cent in record time with turnover soaring to HK\$28bn.

Much of the excitement in the Hong Kong market is a reflection of Wall Street's seemingly unstoppable gains. The property sector, one of the most influential, has also shaken off the blues generated by expectations of tough government measures to deflate property prices.

Alongside these developments the market has been fuelled by the popularity of so-called red chip stocks, meaning companies with China connections. Much of Hong Kong's market capitalisation growth has come from new listings of mainland Chinese-owned and China-related stocks.

Anthony Miller, president of

the merchant bank Asian Investment Partners, reckons that talk about red chips showed "there are some definite signs that a mania is afoot." He sees this sector as an almighty bubble waiting to burst.

Alec Tsui, the chief executive of the Hong Kong exchange, was sensitive to suggestions that the market's growth was mainly attributable to speculative activity. He produced figures which, he said, showed that Hong Kong's market volatility "was similar to other major markets in the world".

Volatility is generally measured by what is known as annualised standard deviation of daily return, the higher the percentage of derivation, the higher the volatility and level of short-term speculative activity. Hong Kong's percentage rose from 1.06 per cent in 1996 to 1.21 per cent in June 1997 against London's 0.68 per cent.

NEW INVESTMENT RATES effective from 1 August 1997

ANNUAL RATES	GROSS p.a.	NET p.a.
SCARBOROUGH 120		
£10,000 - £250,000	7.25	5.80
£25,000 - £50,000	7.15	5.72
SCARBOROUGH 120 BY POST		
£10,000 - £250,000	7.25	5.80
£25,000 - £50,000	7.15	5.72
SCARBOROUGH 100	6.30	5.04
SCARBOROUGH 100 BY POST		
£10,000 - £250,000	6.30	5.04
SCARBOROUGH 75		
£25,000 - £50,000	4.90	3.92
£50,000 - £100,000	4.85	3.88
£100,000 - £250,000	4.80	3.84
£25,000 - £50,000	4.75	3.80
£50,000 - £100,000	4.70	3.76
SCARBOROUGH 75 BY POST		
£25,000 - £50,000	4.90	3.92
£50,000 - £100,000	4.85	3.88
£100,000 - £250,000	4.80	3.84
£25,000 - £50,000	4.75	3.80
£50,000 - £100,000	4.70	3.76
SCARBOROUGH FIFTY		
£40,000 - £250,000	4.25	3.40
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £40,000	3.75	3.00
£10,000 - £25,000	3.70	2.96
SCARBOROUGH FIFTY BY POST		
£40,000 - £250,000	4.25	3.40
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £40,000	3.75	3.00
£10,000 - £25,000	3.70	2.96
SUPERSAVERS (gross interest bonus)		
£25,000 - £50,000	4.00	3.20
£50,000 - £100,000	4.00	3.20
£100,000 - £250,000	4.00	3.20
£25,000 - £50,000	3.90	3.12
£50,000 - £100,000	3.80	3.04
£100,000 - £250,000	3.70	2.96
YOUNG SUPERSAVER		
£1,000 - £5,000	5.50	4.40
£5,000 - £10,000	4.80	3.84
£10,000 - £25,000	4.30	3.44
£25,000 - £50,000	3.80	3.04
£50,000 - £100,000	3.30	2.64
£100,000 - £250,000	2.80	2.24
KEEPSAFE SAVINGS BOND	6.50	5.20
KEEPSAFE SAVINGS BOND BY POST	6.50	5.20
KEEPSAFE INSTANT ACCESS		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.70	3.76
£25,000 - £50,000	4.65	3.72
£50,000 - £100,000	4.60	3.68
KEEPSAFE BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.70	3.76
£25,000 - £50,000	4.65	3.72
£50,000 - £100,000	4.60	3.68
FIRST POST*		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.80	3.04
£25,000 - £50,000	3.80	3.04
£50,000 - £100,000	3.80	3.04
£100,000 - £250,000	3.80	3.04
FIRST POST PLUS		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.10	3.28
£25,000 - £50,000	4.05	3.24
£50,000 - £100,000	4.00	3.20
£100,000 - £250,000	3.95	3.16
NINETY 5		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £50,000	4.15	3.32
£50,000 - £100,000	4.15	3.32
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
NINETY 4		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £50,000	4.15	3.32
£50,000 - £100,000	4.15	3.32
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
NINETY 4 BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £50,000	4.15	3.32
£50,000 - £100,000	4.15	3.32
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
NINETY 4 BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
£25,000 - £50,000	4.15	3.32
£50,000 - £100,000	4.15	3.32
£100,000 - £250,000	4.15	3.32
TESA 2**	5.75	4.60

MONTHLY RATES	GROSS p.a.	NET p.a.
SCARBOROUGH 120		
£10,000 - £250,000	7.90	5.60
£25,000 - £50,000	6.90	5.52
SCARBOROUGH 120 BY POST		
£10,000 - £250,000	7.90	5.60
£25,000 - £50,000	6.90	5.52
SCARBOROUGH 100		
£1,000 - £250,000	6.05	4.84
SCARBOROUGH 100 BY POST		
£1,000 - £250,000	6.05	4.84
SCARBOROUGH 75		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.70	3.76
£100,000 - £250,000	4.65	3.72
£25,000 - £50,000	4.50	3.68
£50,000 - £100,000	4.55	3.64
£1,000 - £250,000	4.50	3.60
SCARBOROUGH 75 BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	4.70	3.76
£100,000 - £250,000	4.65	3.72
£25,000 - £50,000	4.60	3.68
£50,000 - £100,000	4.55	3.64
£1,000 - £250,000	4.50	3.60
SCARBOROUGH FIFTY		
£40,000 - £250,000	4.10	3.28
£100,000 - £250,000	4.00	3.20
£25,000 - £40,000	3.85	3.04
£10,000 - £25,000	3.55	2.84
£1,000 - £250,000	3.50	2.80
SCARBOROUGH FIFTY BY POST		
£40,000 - £250,000	4.10	3.28
£100,000 - £250,000	4.00	3.20
£25,000 - £40,000	3.85	3.04
£10,000 - £25,000	3.50	2.80
FIRST POST*		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.65	2.92
£25,000 - £50,000	3.25	2.60
£50,000 - £100,000	3.15	2.51
£100,000 - £250,000	3.15	2.51
£250,000 - £500,000	2.40	1.92
FIRST POST PLUS		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.95	3.16
£25,000 - £50,000	3.80	3.00
£50,000 - £100,000	3.80	3.00
£100,000 - £250,000	3.80	3.00
£250,000 - £500,000	2.40	1.92
NINETY 5		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£25,000 - £50,000	3.90	3.12
£50,000 - £100,000	3.90	3.12
£100,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£250,000 - £500,000	2.40	1.92
NINETY 5 BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£25,000 - £50,000	3.90	3.12
£50,000 - £100,000	3.90	3.12
£100,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£250,000 - £500,000	2.40	1.92
NINETY 4#		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£25,000 - £50,000	3.70	2.96
£50,000 - £100,000	3.90	3.12
£100,000 - £250,000	1.95	1.56
£250,000 - £500,000	1.12	0.90
£2,000 - £250,000	1.12	0.90
£2,000 - £4,999.99	1.12	0.90
NINETY 4 BY POST		
£25,000 - £250,000	3.90	3.12
£25,000 - £50,000	3.70	2.96
£50,000 - £100,000	3.90	3.12
£100,000 - £250,000	1.95	1.56
£250,000 - £500,000	1.12	0.90
£2,000 - £250,000	1.12	0.90
£2,000 - £4,999.99	1.12	0.90

Strong pound hits Glaxo margins

Sameena Ahmad

Glaxo Wellcome, the pharmaceutical giant, warned yesterday that the strength of sterling and increased marketing spend would mean a sharp fall in margins in the full year.

John Coombe, finance director, said that at current rates, the strong pound would impact full-year profits by 8 per cent - around £240m off current forecasts of £3bn. However, as with all drug companies, sterling's effect will be mainly in translation of currencies rather than a direct financial impact.

Mr Coombe said trading margins could fall as low as 35

per cent, compared to 38.5 per cent at the half year. In a generally weak sector, Glaxo's shares fell 38p to 1291.5p.

Speaking at Glaxo's results, which showed that half-time sales to June were up 8 per cent to £4bn in constant currency, Sir Richard Sykes, chairman, said falling sales in Zantac, the anti-ulcer drug which lost its US patent last week, had been more than compensated for by growth in new products.

Comparing Glaxo's drug profile now to before the acquisition of Wellcome in 1993, Sir Richard said: "We have a wider, deeper, more balanced portfolio now. Once we get over the

Zantac patent issue in the US, we have the products to fuel growth in the future."

Excluding Zantac sales, which fell 12 per cent to £808m, group sales rose 14 per cent and sales of new products, those introduced since 1990, rose 50 per cent. New product sales at £1.3bn in the half year now represent almost a third of total group sales. In contrast Zantac comprised a fifth of Glaxo's total sales compared to more than 40 per cent in 1994. Respiratory drugs represented the largest slice of total sales at 22 per cent, compared to 1994 when Zantac dominated.

Sir Richard said drivers of growth were the group's Aids drugs *Retrovir* and *EpiVir* and new asthma products *Serevent*, *Flixotide* and *Flixonase*. Sir Richard said the Aids drugs, which had more than half the world's anti-HIV market, were "the cornerstone of modern HIV treatments". *EpiVir* more than doubled sales and "is one of the fastest-growing products that we have ever had".

Sir Richard said the company had launched 12 products in the half year with another eight to come in the second half. These include *Romozin* for the treatment of type II diabetes, which received approval for marketing in the UK yesterday. He said

advances in combinatorial chemistry and drug screening increased the chances that drugs currently being developed would be successful.

Commenting on the legal wrangle that has kept generic competition against Zantac out of the US market so far, Mr Coombe said: "We are sitting back and trying to keep straight-faced about it. There are no medals for crowing."

Genpharm, which was granted an exclusive right to sell Zantac until 29 August, cannot do so as it faces a legal challenge from Glaxo over patent infringement which begins on 19 August. Investment column, page 24

Royal Doulton to cut 330 jobs

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

Royal Doulton, the fine china group which has been hit by the move away from formal dining, is cutting 330 jobs in an attempt to become more competitive and mitigate the effects of the strong pound.

All the redundancies will be in the Stoke-on-Trent region, where the company has been based for more than 200 years. Royal Doulton employs 4,800 people in the Potteries, mostly in manufacturing functions.

Most of the cuts will be in two of the group's nine Stoke plants, with some 270 cuts coming from production and the remainder in clerical and commercial divisions. Further job cuts have not been ruled out.

The strong pound has proved a particular problem for Doulton, which exports half of its £250m sales to markets such as the US, Japan and Europe. The company said yesterday that currency factors had "resulted in a sales shortfall".

The job cuts are part of an operating review being undertaken by the new chief executive,

Patrick Wenger. He took over in May following the sudden departure of Stuart Lyons, who had been chief executive for 12 years but was blamed for the £1.6m costs of an abortive takeover.

Mr Wenger said yesterday: "Royal Doulton needs to be efficient and competitive to meet the changing demands of the world ceramic market. The strong pound has created a difficult world-wide trading climate for many manufacturers including ourselves and it is essential we aim to keep production, sales and stocks in balance."

Mr Wenger admitted Royal Doulton was "a labour-intensive organisation" with some parts of the business, such as the painting of miniature figures, done by hand.

Royal Doulton, which was demerged from the Pearson media group in 1993, has been badly affected by the trend away from formal dining. It has developed a mid-market Doulton Everyday range, though the City has been concerned it could cannibalise sales of the more upmarket bone china.

Royal Doulton shares closed 2.5p lower at 220p.

Ronson receives takeover approach from mystery bidder

Magnus Grimond

Ronson, the troubled lighters to be branded clothes group which has just undergone a big board upheaval, saw its shares rise 2.5p to 21p yesterday after it revealed it had received an unsolicited takeover approach.

Mystery surrounded the identity of the possible bidder, although it is definitely not

Howard Hodgson, the recently ousted chief executive.

Mr Hodgson, who still owns just under 2 per cent of Ronson and has previously been linked to bid rumours, said yesterday: "It genuinely isn't me. The situation is that I am at a complete loss as to who it would be."

The flamboyant Mr Hodgson was stripped of his executive duties in June and left the board

at Ronson's annual meeting on Wednesday in the wake of the departure of his girlfriend and acting finance director, Christine Pickles.

Shaun Dowling, the company doctor who moved up to become executive chairman after Mr Hodgson left, refused to give any clue as to who was making the latest approach. However, he said he hoped

the issue would be resolved "before too long" as it was "slightly disruptive to the normal course of business".

Speculation last night centred on the Albion Consortium, a New York-based fund which is in smaller British companies. The company helped to underwrite last November's rights issue to raise £10.4m at 25p a share and now has an 18

per cent stake. Despite the fact that the shares have been as low as 12.5p, Albion is thought to have turned down an offer from a large Far Eastern group in the region of 26p a share.

Mr Dowling refused to comment on the speculation, but added: "I couldn't disagree with the logic that someone else could develop [Ronson] better than us. They would have more

resources than us. I couldn't deny that."

Early last month, Ronson announced that profits of £2.76m had turned into a loss of £2.17m in 1996, some £200,000 higher than forecast in an earlier profit warning. The group suffered a £900,000 write-off for bad debts and warned of further "significant" losses in the first half.

IN BRIEF

Huntingdon confident of changes

Huntingdon Life Sciences, the animal testing company that had dealings in its shares suspended last week, said it was confident of completing changes demanded by the Home Office of practices relating to its treatment of animals. The Government has threatened to revoke the group's licence to conduct experiments on animals, saying it had "extremely serious" failures and omissions at its plant. Huntingdon announced a loss after tax of £308,000 in the six months to June, after exceptional costs.

Barclays Life beats pension deadline

Barclays Life, the insurance arm of Barclays Bank, said that it had completed the first stage of reviews of its pension mis-selling cases three months ahead of its 31 October deadline. The company has carried out 90 per cent of its urgent reviews, involving 9,400 assessments. Compensation worth £20m is being paid in 2,700 cases. Royal Sun Alliance, which saw its deadline to complete the first tranche of urgent reviews expire yesterday, is expected to announce it has achieved its target.

Cowie plans drive into Europe

Cowie, the bus group and motor dealer, is planning to drive into continental Europe for the first time. It is in serious talks with several European bus companies in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Cowie is also looking to expand its car leasing division by teaming up with European rivals. Yesterday it announced profits of £47.6m for the six months to June, a rise of 48 per cent on the previous year, thanks to last year's acquisition of British Bus and a strong performance from its motor dealerships.

Logica seeks £51m for acquisition

Logica, the computer services group, announced the £51m acquisition of Irish software group Aldison, which sells networks systems and services to mobile phone and pager operators worldwide. It is raising £52.5m via a one-for-seven rights issue to fund the deal. Logica, which issued a profits warning last month, estimated that its pre-tax profits for the year to June grew 14 per cent to £28m.

Economists hail US slowdown

America's economic nirvana continued into the second quarter of the year, according to new GDP figures. The economy expanded by 2.2 per cent in the second quarter, a slowdown from 4.9 per cent in the first quarter. But the figure was stronger than economists had expected, and the slowdown was welcomed after the unsustainable pace of growth earlier this year. Separate figures showed new unemployment claims last week falling to the lowest level for more than 23 years. There were 277,000 jobless claims, down from 299,000 the week before.

Windfall spending spree 'not widespread'

A survey commissioned by the British Retail Consortium suggests that building society windfalls have not created a widespread high street spending spree. A survey of 1,200 individuals who have received or expect to receive a windfall, found that 59 per cent intend to keep the shares. 32 per cent will sell with the remainder unsure. Of those intending to sell, a third will spend the money on holidays, with 11 per cent planning to spend the cash on cars, and 20 per cent on home improvements such as a new kitchen or bathroom.

AAM takes over Pacific for £55m

Aberdeen Asset Management (AAM), formerly Abtrust, is to take over Pacific, a fund management company owned by Scottish Provident, the Edinburgh office. The deal, worth £55m, will involve Scottish Provident taking a 41 per cent stake in AAM, whose funds under management grew from £3.1bn to £11bn. David Woods, chief executive at Scottish Provident, said policyholders would gain from taking the stake in AAM.

Amvescap profits surge after merger

Amvescap, formed earlier this year from the merger of fund management groups AIM and Invesco, announced pre-tax profits of £73.5m (£52m) for the six months to June, even though the strong pound wiped £5.8m off the figures. The group has benefited from the strong growth in global capital markets. It is on the lookout for acquisitions in a variety of regions, including Britain. Funds under management have increased to £106bn (£44bn) and it raised its interim dividend by 25 per cent to 2.5p.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Abbey (P)	161.8m (145.0m)	19.1m (16.2m)	115.7p (111.7p)	16.5p
Alfred (High Rank) (P)	734m (650m)	424m (420m)	122.3p (118.3p)	16.5p (15.5p)
Amesbury (P)	220m (114m)	79.5m (32m)	10.4p (8.7p)	2.5p (2p)
Avonmouth Marine Products (P)	22.1m (21.0m)	1.21m (0.70m)	8p (4.4p)	2p (1p)
British Telecom (P)	3.80m (3.54m)	881m (880m)	8.4p (8p)	-
Carole Group (P)	702m (628m)	47.6m (32.2m)	16.6p (14.1p)	3.6p (3.4p)
John Foster (P)	17.3m (12.5m)	-0.72m (-1.24m)	-5.8p (-10.5p)	nil (-)
Stem Waltham (P)	4.11m (4.19m)	1.52m (1.58m)	29.4p (29.7p)	15p (15p)
Green Property (P)	113.4m (65.5m)	15.8m (12.9m)	17.81p (15.19p)	17.8p (17.2p)
Huntingdon Life Sciences (P)	134.5m (93.7m)	-0.35m (-2.65m)	-0.3p (-1.8p)	-
Leanne (P)	92m (253m)	26m (47m)	2.1p (3.9p)	-
Mountbatten (P)	-	-0.09m (0.80m)	-1.13p (10.57p)	-
WVF Group (P)	74.5m (57.9m)	1.91m (2.57m)	17.1p (22.3p)	8p (8p)
Ocean Group (P)	570m (550m)	32.0m (27.0m)	14.2p (12.1p)	5.4p (5p)
Premier Asset Bus (P)	0.26m (-)	-1.74m (-)	-4.36p (-)	-
Rogers (P)	9.01m (8.92m)	-0.02m (0.08m)	-0.01p (0.15p)	nil (nil)
Stewart (P)	47.2m (45.7m)	-10.5m (0.12m)	7.8p (8p)	3.45p (3p)
Sumner (P)	9.82m (10.9m)	0.03m (0.30m)	0.08p (0.75p)	nil (0.97p)
Sumner & Nield (P)	0.52m (0.47m)	0.47m (0.47m)	20.05p (16.33p)	8.5p (7.5p)
Sumner Fine Jew (P)	16.4m (12.8m)	2.3m (1.2m)	18.8p (11.8p)	2.85p (-)
Ti Group (P)	933m (925m)	112m (125m)	16.1p (19.3p)	3.1p (4.73p)
Wolfe (P)	16.9m (-)	-1.78m (-)	-7.02p (-)	-

(P) - Profit (P) - Profit and EPS before pre-exceptions (-) - None - turnover is revised income

DUNFERMLINE BUILDING SOCIETY

RATES OF INTEREST from 1 August 1997

INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS	Interest payable annually	
Premium Plus* (including Bonus Interest)	GROSS RATES	NET RATES* (ILLUSTRATIVE)
£100,000+	6.90%	5.52%
£50,000 - £99,999	6.70%	5.36%
£25,000 - £49,999	6.35%	5.08%
£5,000 - £24,999	5.95%	4.76%
Premium Shares		
£100,000+	5.80%	4.64%
£50,000 - £99,999	5.60%	4.48%
£25,000 - £49,999	5.20%	4.16%
£10,000 - £24,999	4.70%	3.76%
£5,000 - £ 9,999	4.30%	3.44%
£500 - £ 4,999	3.80%	3.04%
Dunfermline Tessas (Sixth Issue)		
£9,000+	6.95%	5.56%
£6,000 - £8,999	6.80%	5.44%
£3,000 - £5,999	6.60%	5.28%
£100 - £2,999	6.10%	4.88%
Dunfermline Tessas (Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Issues)		
£3,000+	7.35%	
£100 - £2,999	6.35%	
Dunfermline Gold		
£25,000+	4.45%	3.56%
£10,000 - £24,999	4.15%	3.32%
£5,000 - £ 9,999	3.90%	3.12%
£2,500 - £ 4,999	3.65%	2.92%
£500 - £ 2,499	3.40%	2.72%
£100 - £ 499	0.75%	0.60%
Dunfermline Direct**		
£50,000+	7.20%	5.76%
£25,000 - £49,999	7.00%	5.60%
£10,000 - £24,999	6.70%	5.36%
£5,000 - £ 9,999	6.00%	4.80%
£2,000 - £ 4,999	5.10%	4.08%
HeadStart Account		
£1 or more	3.45%	2.76%

Please note that all rates for all the accounts featured are variable.

PREMIUM PLUS*

Interest rates for this account include bonus interest of 0.50% gross p.a. payable if no more than one withdrawal (not exceeding £10,000) is made in the year prior to the annual interest due date of 30 September.

INTEREST PAYABLE OTHER THAN ANNUALLY

Where interest on Premium and Premium Plus Accounts is payable monthly (or on Premium Account half yearly) the above annual rates are reduced by 0.50% gross.

OTHER INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

The rates of interest payable on Gold Deposits, Treasurers Deposits and Special Deposits for Charities and Exempt Pension Funds follow the tiers and rates shown above for Dunfermline Gold, except for balances in excess of £50,000 where the rate will be 5.00% gross p.a.

Taxplanner Accounts interest rates are equivalent to Dunfermline Gold across all tiers.

**Dunfermline Direct Accounts only available by post from the Society's Head Office.

Dunfermline ScotGold Accounts for non-resident UK citizens only available on application to the Society's Head Office.

Details of the rates of interest applicable to all other investment accounts (including closed issues) are available from any branch office.

TAX ARRANGEMENTS

Interest will be paid or credited after deduction of income tax at the lower rate of 20% or, subject to the required certification, gross. Please note, you may be liable to pay tax at a higher rate depending on your tax position. Where the tax deducted exceeds an investor's tax liability (if any) a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. For details and a registration form for payment of interest gross, please see Inland Revenue leaflet IR110. *The net rates quoted are for illustrative purposes and assume a relevant rate of tax of 20%.

For further information on the Society's investment services write to the Society at the address below or call in to any branch office.

HEAD OFFICE CALEDONIA HOUSE CARNEGIE AVENUE
DUNFERMLINE KY11 5PJ TEL 01383 627727
www.dunfermline-bis.co.uk

revised interest rates

NOTICE TO ALL BORROWERS

The Society's standard variable base rate for new and existing borrowers will be increased to 8.09% from 1st August 1997 or at such other time in accordance with the terms of the mortgage deed.

NOTICE TO INVESTORS

REVISED INTEREST RATES

EFFECTIVE AT 1st AUGUST 1997

AMOUNT INVESTED	GROSS %	NET %	GROSS % (MONTHLY)	NET % (MONTHLY)
CURRENT ISSUES				
NOVA STAR (NINTH ISSUE)				
£10,000 - £300,000	6.20	4.96	5.95	4.76
£1,000 - £9,999	4.50	3.60	4.25	3.40
NOVA PLUS SPECIAL ACCOUNT				
£200,000 - £300,000	4.40	3.52	-	-
NOVA PLUS (ISSUE 2)/NOVA GROSS (ISSUE 2)				
(INCLUDING CLOSED ISSUES TRANSFERRED ON MATURITY) (NET RATES DO NOT APPLY TO NOVA GROSS (ISSUE 2))				
£50,000 - £300,000	4.20	3.36	4.20	3.36
£10,000 - £49,999	3.65	2.92	3.65	2.92
£5,000 - £9,999	2.90	2.32	2.90	2.32
£1,000 - £4,999	2.60	2.08	-	-
NOVA PLUS/NOVA GROSS ACCOUNT				
(INCLUDING CLOSED ISSUES TRANSFERRED ON MATURITY) (NET RATES DO NOT APPLY TO NOVA GROSS)				
£50,000 - £300,000	4.20	3.36	4.20	3.36
£10,000 - £49,999	3.65	2.92	3.65	2.92
£5,000 - £9,999	2.90	2.32	2.90	2.32
£1,000 - £4,999	2.60	2.08	-	-
£500 - £499	0.50	0.40	-	-
SMALL SAVERS ACCOUNT				
£1 - £999	3.70	2.96	-	-
NOVA 50				
£50,000 - £300,000	7.10	5.68	6.85	5.48
NOVA GROSS SPECIAL ACCOUNT				
£200,000 - £300,000	4.40	-	-	-
TESSA & TESSA 2				
£1 - £9,000	7.05	-	-	-
DIRECT 50				
£100,000 - £300,000	7.45	5.96	7.20	5.76
NOVA STAR (SIXTH/SEVENTH ISSUE)				
£1,000 - £300,000	6.20	4.96	6.00	4.80
NOVA STAR (EIGHTH ISSUE)				
£1,000 - £300,000	6.20	4.96	5.95	4.76
NOVA SELECT II				
£25,000 - £300,000	6.30	5.04	6.05	4.84
£5,000 - £24,999	6.15	4.92	5.90	4.72
BONUS BOOSTER BOND (ISSUE 1)				
£25,000 - £300,000	6.25*	5.00	6.00*	4.80
£1,000 - £24,999	6.15*	4.92	5.90**	4.72
NOVA SUPER FEEDER (S.A.Y.E. FEEDER ACCOUNT)				
£5,000 - £300,000	5.95	4.76	-	-
NOVA FEEDER (S.A.Y.E. FEEDER ACCOUNT)				
£1,200	4.95	3.96	-	-
HIGH/EXTRA HIGH INTEREST ACCOUNTS				
£50,000 - £300,000	4.20	3.36	4.20	3.36
£10,000 - £49,999	3.65	2.92	3.65	2.92
£5,000 - £4,999	3.40	2.72	3.40*	2.72

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Data Bank		
FTSE 100	4907.5	-19.8
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FTSE 350	2352.0	-6.8
SEAQ VOLUME	920.6m shares	
48,156 bargains		
Gifts Index	97.63	-0.25
Share spotlight		
Share price, pence		
		

No let-up for clubs as Sunderland takes a drubbing



MARKET REPORT

CATHY NEWMAN

It was Sunderland's turn to take a drubbing on the City's home turf yesterday, coming just a few days after Newcastle's loss following the injury to the club's - and England's - top striker, Alan Shearer.

Shares in Sunderland dropped 10p to a fresh low of 337.5p, many a mile removed from the 760p peak reached soon after the club floated on Christmas Eve.

The attack on Sunderland was spearheaded by analysts as they returned to their desks yesterday after the previous night's trip to watch the inaugural game at the club's new £15m and evangelically named Stadium of Light.

Some questioned whether the 40,000-seater stadium was anything more than a white elephant, particularly in the light of the club's relegation from the money-spinning Premier

League to the First Division. The lacklustre performance on the pitch on Wednesday night rekindled fears that the club may have to open up its cheque book to sign more players.

Newcastle, though, managed to make headway yesterday, scoring a 3.5p rise to 124p.

More than £12m was wiped off the company's value on Monday in reaction to the news of Shearer's injury.

Footsie, like Sunderland, was lacking energy yesterday, getting pulled all over the park by Wall Street and sterling.

The pound firmly reclaimed the DM3 threshold, putting pressure once again on leading exporters and manufacturers.

Although Wall Street opened on a firm note - following favourable news on the economy - the Dow Jones swiftly headed into negative territory after a Chicago PMI

report knocked confidence. Footsie, up 14 points in early trading, closed 19.9 points lower at 4907.5.

Dixons, however, motored to another all-time high. The shares climbed 12p to close at 607.5p, making a two-day gain of 36p in response to the Government's ban on recommended retail prices in the electrical goods market which, investors believe, could benefit electrical retailers.

Encouraging noises from a host of brokers - SBC Warburg, Morgan Stanley and Société Générale among them - also boosted Dixons.

Kingfisher, owner of the Comet chain, climbed with

Dixons to finish 17.5p higher at 720p, not far off its year's high of 750.5p.

Next - looking smart after the success of its summer sales - added 22p to close at 759.5p; and Marks & Spencer joined in the fun, improving 12.5p to end at 589p.

Oil-related stocks also made slight progress, with Lescage one of the star blue chips of the day, up 10.5p to 279p.

The company's steady-as-she-goes interim results - showing a 75 per cent exploration strike rate and a 16 per cent increase in cash flow - impressed the likes of Merrill Lynch, and pushed the shares to a year-high.

Shell nudged up 2p to close at 450.5p, partly aided by an "add" note from NatWest Securities.

NatWest also recommended BP, which added 1.5p at one point but gave up the ghost later in the day and closed unchanged at 854.5p.

Oils, though, were not altogether in the pink as Dresdner Kleinwort Benson downgraded the sector from "overweight" to "neutral".

Investors in pharmaceuticals stocks tasted a somewhat bitter pill as Glaxo Wellcome's shares ended lower over worries on profit margins.

Although Glaxo's shares pushed 2p higher in early trading after releasing first half results that were largely in line with expectations, analysts said they had concerns about margins and the expiry of patents on the Zovirax and Zantac drugs. The shares closed 38p down at £12.91.

SmithKline Beecham followed Glaxo's downward spiral, shedding 28p to £11.89. Zeneca did little better, and was caught in the slipstream to finish 7p off at £20.21.

British Telecom was in the doldrums - down 4p to 426.5p - after Kleinwort advised investors to sell amid renewed worries about the MCI merger.

Meanwhile, Logica's £51m acquisition of Aldison, a supplier of network systems to mobile phone operators, met with a favourable reaction, Logica's shares zooming up 60p to 750p.

Other notable risers included Headlam Group, which gained 13p to 313.5p after its £30.1m purchase of MCD on Wednesday.

Tradeport jumped 5p to 85p after announcing that over £1bn worth of shares have been traded on its electronic exchange since it was launched.

□ Cadcentre, the engineering software group which came to the market at the tail end of last year, closed 10p poorer at 235p, after Robin Lee, a director, sold half of his shareholding. Mr Lee, who wanted the money to plan for his retirement at the end of next year, offered 450,000 shares at 235p each. 3i, another big shareholder in Cadcentre, also sold 150,000 shares to "several institutions".

□ Investors were supping up shares in Surrey Free Inns, the ADM-quoted pub group, after the company outlined plans to spend £10m opening 10 new branded pub outlets. The stock leapt 16p to close at 426.5p, amid whispers that the company was about to be bid for. Pre-tax profits for the group, which is due to join the full market in September, jumped 93 per cent to £2.3m in the year to the end of May.

Alcoholic Beverages		
Guinness	100.00	100.00
Heineken	100.00	100.00
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Banks, Merchant		
Barclays	100.00	100.00
HSBC	100.00	100.00
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Banks, Retail		
First Direct	100.00	100.00
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Breweries, Pubs & Rest		
Asahi	100.00	100.00
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Building/Construction		
Bovis Lend Lease	100.00	100.00
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Chemicals		
ICI	100.00	100.00
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Electronics		
Amstrad	100.00	100.00
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Food Manufacturers		
Unilever	100.00	100.00
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Household Goods		
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Insurance		
Aviva	100.00	100.00
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International		
British Airways	100.00	100.00
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Life Assurance		
Prudential	100.00	100.00
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Virgin Media	100.00	100.00
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Printing & Paper		
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Land Securities	100.00	100.00
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Retailers, General		
Debenhams	100.00	100.00
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Retailers, Food		
Asda	100.00	100.00
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Telecommunications		
British Telecom	100.00	100.00
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Textiles & Apparel		
Next	100.00	100.00
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Rights Issues		
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Recent Issues		
Company	Price	Qtd
... (many more rows) ...		

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Trigger is a big shot once more

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON reports from Goodwood

In racing, it is said, they never come back. Now it is the cliché that will have to disappear following Double Trigger's success here in the Goodwood Cup yesterday. Those who said he had gone were themselves not visible after the veteran's pillar-to-post scamper across the Sussex downs.

It had seemed the old gun-slinger was no longer looking down the barrel of a smoking pistol, but rather into the face of a drained tumbler as he sprawled across the saloon bar. The six-year-old is taken to the gallops each day of his life and the suspicion was that his spirit had succumbed to the monotony.

Double Trigger does not even look the same effervescent figure that started winning races at Redcar four years ago. His once-vivid chestnut and white hide now looks rather pale, as if he has been through a few spin cycles too many. "He's a six-year-old entire and horses start to think about different things at that age," Mark Johnston, the trainer, said. "He goes around the paddock a bit quieter than he used to and with a little less sparkle."

The heart inside this seasoned casing remains as robust as ever though. It was pumping busily soon after start of the two-mile journey. "I got him on his toes before we went in the gate and, after he broke well, I kicked him in the belly and rode him for the first furlong to really let him know he was in a race," Michael Roberts, the victorious jockey, reported. "To be honest he gave me a difficult ride after that because he kept pulling himself up."

Johnston went on to complete a double in the Golden Mile Handicap with Fly To The Stars, who seemed to relish

the opportunity to stretch his legs when an electrical malfunction opened his section of the stalls early. After a restart the three-year-old was expertly handled by Oliver Peslier. This was not a day for ordinary performances and Dagners Drawn set the standard when he was carried to victory on an immense sigh of relief from Kieren Fallon in the Richmond Stakes. A furlong out, Henry Cecil's cult appeared to have been the victim of a conspiracy as a phalanx of the remaining two runners blocked his path. When a crack appeared, however, he was through it like a shaft of sunlight. "I thought I was going to have a nightmare journey and for a while I was beginning to think 'oh no here we go again,'" Fallon reported. "But then they broke up nicely ahead of me and I thought

"there is a God". It would have been a disaster if they hadn't split.

"This horse doesn't look as impressive as he feels. He's got the engine, he's got speed and even though the 2,000 Guineas is a long way away you can look forward to the race with such a lovely horse. I think he's drawn in a top-priced 7-1 with Ladybrokes for the Classic next May. Best bet today may be AMYAS (nap 2.45) who ran well in the Newmarket handicap which has produced subsequent winners Maylene, Stanton Harcourt and Manzanil. Two years ago Con Collins sent over Almay from Ireland to plunder the Molecomb and today the same trainer's Lady Alexander (next best 3.50), who beat King Of Kings last time, can oblige. Yesterday's results, page 26

should make a smart performer over middle distances on fast ground. Humorous is the threat.

3.50: LADY ALEXANDER beat King Of Kings by a short-head in the Group Three Angles Stakes over six furlongs at the Curragh. She is clearly useful and can follow up. Ousaine is the danger.

FIRST SHOW

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
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Goodwill	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
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HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
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Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
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HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
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HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
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Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
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Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
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Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
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Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

HYPERION

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
Hyperion	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

GOODWOOD

Horse	Jockey	Weight	Time	Place	Time	Place
2.15 JAWHART	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
2.45 SOUTHERLY WIND	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
3.20 BRIGHT WATER (nap)	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2
3.50 LADY ALEXANDER (nap)	J. P. M. 11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2

Ottey on course for one last hurrah

Mike Rowbottom on the 37-year-old queen of sprinting, who hopes to add a world championship 100 metres title in Athens to her vast collection

The full realisation of how much she is valued in the world of athletics came home to Merlene Ottey four years ago in Stuttgart's Gottlieb Daimler stadium, as she received a prolonged torrent of sympathetic applause while accepting the world championship 100 metres silver medal.

Her reception outdid that afforded to the winner of the event, Gail Devers, who was given the verdict by one thousandth of a second after both athletes had recorded 10.94sec.

"That was the first time I realised how much I was appreciated by people," Ottey said yesterday. "After that moment I would not let track and field stress me any more. I was just going to run for the fun of it. The gold medal is not always so important."

At 37, the woman who has long been referred to as the Queen of Sprinting – and who recently described herself as the "Grandmother of Sprinting" – has established herself in the sport's history.

Since she started her international career in 1979, the graceful Jamaican has amassed 32 medals in major championships, including a record number of 13 in the world championships.

"I consider I've done a lot in track and field," she said. "If I had to retire tomorrow, I would be content. Anything else now is just an extra."

Her sentiments are understandable. Grandmother, however, has not finished yet; indeed, her desire to compete for those extra medals has outlasted even that of her sometime training partner and contemporary, Linford Christie.

At the best of her shoe company, Ottey and Christie sit together under the TV lights yesterday garbed in robes designed on the theme of Ancient Greece and wearing replicas of the laurel wreaths which marked the first Olympic champions.

But while the King of Sprinting has abdicated – Christie is only here to watch – the Queen remains, seeking to maintain her way in what must, realistically, be her last global championship.

"Three years ago I said I would retire from championships when Linford retired," she recalled with a grin. "But I have no problem with the Jamaican federation or people, and as long as I am doing well I will always run for Jamaica."

When she finally does retire, Ottey plans to employ her talents within the world of fashion – she already has experience of modelling and has helped design her own brand of sportswear.

But a woman who describes her life as "a miracle" is not about to pin herself down with any mundane deadlines.

For all the talk of running for fun, her passion for the event still burns as bright. Last year in the Olympics, when Devers beat her once again to the 100m gold on a photo-finish, Ottey was regally indignant. She said quite plainly that she had been cheated out of the Olympic title because Devers – who was given the verdict by five thousandths of a second – had broken the finish line with her shoulder rather than her torso.

The indignance returned yesterday when she was asked to comment upon the International Amateur Athletic Federation's late decision to award wild card entries to all defending champions who had failed to qualify.

"I don't like the way it has been done," said Ottey, who had to travel to Jamaica from her home in Monte Carlo to compete in her national trials. "I really believe that if Michael Johnson had not been injured for the US trials there wouldn't be wild cards."

This year Ottey has recovered from the hamstring injury which prevented her contesting the

'If I had to retire tomorrow I would be content. Anything else now is just an extra'

world indoor championships and, if there were any doubt about the nature of ambition, you have only to look at her to clarify it.

"I changed my hair a week ago," Ottey said. "It's something for good luck. A goldsmith colour. Let's see what happens." In the 200 metres, Ottey faces the Frenchwoman who outran her in the finishing straight of the Olympic final last year, Marie-Jose Pécé. Her chances in the



Merlene Ottey shows the style that has amassed 32 medals in major championships

Photograph: Empics

shorter sprint look brighter in the absence of Devers, who is only doing the relay and the defending champion, Gwen Torrence, who has withdrawn. Her main challenger appears to be Marion Jones, the formidable up-and-coming talent making a return to the sport from US basketball.

"There are so many good sprinters around," Ottey said. "And the world championships always seem to provide

surprises. So I have to be ready to produce my best."

That is something she has learned the hard way since she learned her running barefoot, keeping one stride ahead of the boys in the back streets of her home village of Hanover, 12 miles from Montego Bay.

Her biggest asset, she believes, is her ability to get straight back to running after setbacks or defeats. "I accept those losses and go on," she said. "I don't

hide away or say I am going to retire like a lot of people do."

Her championship record is not something that she is pre-occupied with. "Maybe when I finish I will sit down and count the medals," she said. "But not now."

When that time comes, the tally is very likely to be more than the current figure of 32. And a global 100 metres gold after nearly 20 years of trying, would probably mean more than any of the others.

Torrence makes late exit as Nigeria's presence disrupts calm

Gwen Torrence, the world 100 metres champion, has withdrawn from the World Championships, starting tomorrow in Athens, without offering an explanation, a United States team official said yesterday.

Torrence, 32, was granted a wild card by the International Amateur Athletic Federation to

defend the title she won two years ago in Gothenburg, after knee and leg injuries kept her out of the US trials.

However, Ashland Whitfield, the US Track and Field's national team co-ordinator, said yesterday: "I got a phone call from one of her agents last night to say that Gwen had withdrawn

from the championships. She did not give a specific reason and I did not ask." Earlier this month, Torrence pulled out of the Nice Grand Prix on the eve of the meeting, again without giving an explanation.

A European Union ban on sporting contacts with Nigeria in protest of its human rights

record has failed to keep the African nation from attending the Championships.

The IAAF officials are absolutely not affecting track and field," Giorgio IAAFI, a spokesman for the IAAFI, said. He added the ban would start with a record 200 nations and without a single outlier.

Human rights activists criticised the failure to apply sporting sanctions. "It is absolutely appalling to have World Championships in an EU country in contradiction with the EU common position," Lotte Lechowicz, the European Director of Human Rights Watch, said.

The 15 EU nations, includ-

ing Greece, imposed sanctions on Nigeria on 4 December 1995 after the military regime of General Sani Abacha executed nine opponents, including the author and human rights activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The sanctions included a ban on Nigerian sports teams competing at events in EU countries.

Thorn handed one-match ban for high tackle

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Brisbane Broncos will be without Brad Thorn for their final World Club Championship match at Halifax on Monday.

Their versatile forward was sent off for a high tackle on London's Tony Martin in the match between the two sides on Sunday and was suspended for one match at a disciplinary hearing yesterday.

Brisbane, one of four unbeaten Australian sides in Group A of the competition, are unlikely to be greatly inconvenienced by his absence against opponents who have not won a match.

Before that, Canterbury, already eliminated from their future, are being beaten twice by Wigan, have little but pride to play for at London Broncos, who can beat Wigan to the top qualifying spot if they win tonight.

The Wigan stand-off, Nigel Wright, is to see a specialist over the flare-up of a groin injury that threatens to continue his wretched luck with injuries.

John Cartwright will make his comeback after a broken arm – delayed last week by a training accident – in Salford's match against Adelaide on Sun-

day. His team-mate Andy Platt, who suffered one of the game's quickest injuries when he pulled a hamstring chasing the kick-off against North Queensland, also hopes to be fit.

Auckland Warriors, who have been assured that there will be a place for them in Super League next season, could be preparing to use their wingman, Lee Oudenryn, as a bargaining counter to try to prise Henry Paul from Wigan.

Oudenryn, who once beat Martin Offiah in a challenge sprint, will be, after the departure of Denis Betts to Wigan, the only non-New Zealander left at a club now committed to a home-grown policy.

Perth Reds, unlike Auckland, have failed to gain any assurances about their future. Players emerged from a video conference with Super League officials yesterday uncertain whether they will have a club to play for next season.

That could help Paris when the sides meet at the Waca today. Victory for the French side, who promote Matt O'Connor and Craig Mackintosh to the starting line-up, would put pressure on Leeds, who are likely to be without Iestyn Harris when they play North Queensland on Sunday, in the struggle for first place in European Group A.

Lampard secures European place

Equestrianism
GENEVIEVE MURPHY
reports from Brockenhurst

Di Lampard made sure of a place on the British squad for this month's European Show Jumping Championships yesterday when she and Abberval Dream finished second in the first of two rounds over demanding courses, which, according to Whitaker, were bigger than those built for the first trial at Windsor in May.

This evening's Nations Cup at Gijon in Spain will be the last contest in which points can be earned. Both Michael Whitaker and Robert Smith could move into the lead with two good rounds but no one else is in a position to overtake Lampard.

NEW FOREST AND HAMPSHIRE SHOW (Brockenhurst, Hants) British Show Jumping Championships, 2nd round, 19.00. 1. Lampard (GB) 6-2 6-4; 2. Abberval Dream (GB) 6-2 6-4; 3. Whitaker (GB) 6-2 6-4; 4. Smith (GB) 6-2 6-4; 5. O'Connor (GB) 6-2 6-4; 6. Mackintosh (GB) 6-2 6-4; 7. Harris (GB) 6-2 6-4; 8. Paul (GB) 6-2 6-4; 9. Platt (GB) 6-2 6-4; 10. Oudenryn (GB) 6-2 6-4; 11. Offiah (GB) 6-2 6-4; 12. Betts (GB) 6-2 6-4; 13. Devers (GB) 6-2 6-4; 14. Torrence (GB) 6-2 6-4; 15. Christie (GB) 6-2 6-4; 16. Ottey (GB) 6-2 6-4; 17. Jones (GB) 6-2 6-4; 18. Pécé (GB) 6-2 6-4; 19. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 20. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 21. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 22. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 23. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 24. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 25. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 26. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 27. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 28. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 29. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 30. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 31. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 32. Saro-Wiwa (GB) 6-2 6-4; 33. Lechowicz (GB) 6-2 6-4; 34. 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Adams tames a grizzly wicket

Cricket

TOMMY STANFORTH

Chris Adams hit a superb century off 107 balls to put Derbyshire in control after the first day of their Britannic Assurance County Championship basement battle against Durham at Chester-le-Street.

A pitch of uneven bounce resulted in 16 wickets falling to prompt the obligatory call to Lord's as bad light ended play with 13 overs remaining.

At that point Durham, nine points ahead of Derbyshire before the start of play, were struggling on 109 for 6 in reply to the visitors' 254. Only Jon Lewis (36) and Mike Foster (37 not out) reached double figures for the home side.

After Derbyshire were put in by Durham Adams became the second Derbyshire player in

successive matches to score 100 before lunch as he followed the example set by Adrian Rollins at Cheltenham last week.

Adams reached his second century off 107 balls to put Derbyshire in control after the first day of their Britannic Assurance County Championship basement battle against Durham at Chester-le-Street.

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After Derbyshire were put in by Durham Adams became the second Derbyshire player in

Paul Taylor collected his third five-wicket haul of the season as Northamptonshire reduced Yorkshire to 163 for 9 on a shortened first day at Headingley.

He exploited helpful conditions in which the ball swung, moved off the seam and occasionally bounced disconcertingly to finish with figures of 5 for 42 in 15 overs. The batsmen were also handicapped by bad light and rain which cut 53 overs out of the day.

Craig White and Bradley Parker threatened some resistance in a fifth-wicket stand which yielded 48 in 11 overs, but Yorkshire surrendered too many wickets to errors of judgement.

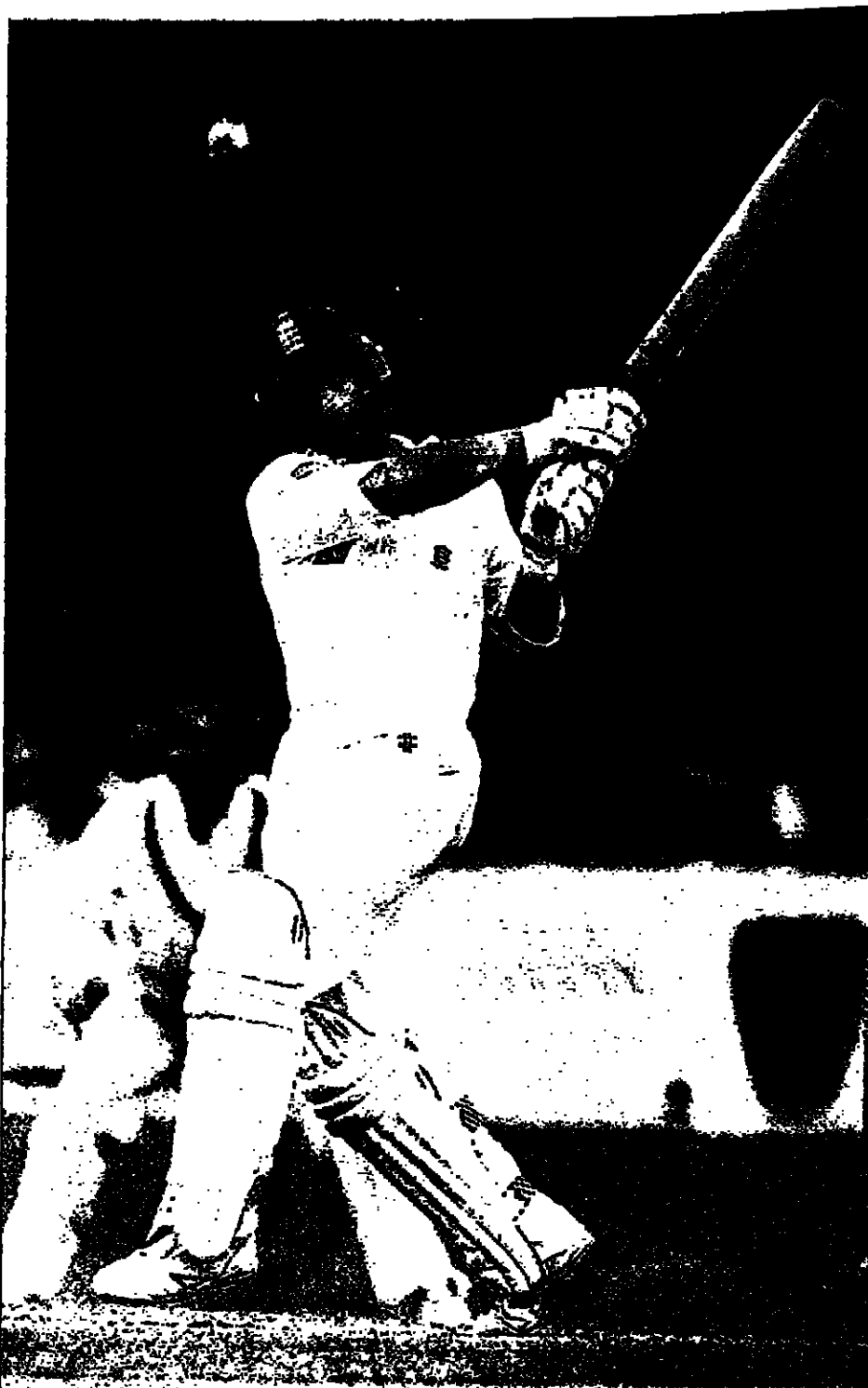
Parker, whose 26 was the top score, was a notable exception in that he was bowled by a delivery from Scott Boswell which kept wickedly low.

Yorkshire, who opted to bat after winning the toss, were grateful to take advantage of the poor light which brought an early finish.

The home side are without the services of Peter Hartley, who goes into hospital at the weekend for a hernia operation. His place was taken by Alex Morris because their preferred replacement, Ryan Sidebottom, is on duty with the England Under-19 side.

The Australian captain Mark Taylor has been forced to miss Australia's four-day game against Somerset today with a recurring back injury.

Taylor has been advised by the team physiotherapist, Erol Alcott, to take a break from cricket and spend some time with his family. According to Alcott, the injury is "minor" and Taylor will be fit in time for the fifth Test at Trent Bridge next Thursday.



Nasser Hussain, of Essex, hits out to midwicket on his way to a half-century against Leicestershire at Colchester yesterday. Photograph: Peter Jay

Rule of Law not applicable to others

HENRY BLOFIELD

reports from Colchester
Essex 204-2 v Leicestershire

It was a pertinent commentary on the events of this summer that when England's leading batsman, Nasser Hussain, reached 50, Stuart Law, from Queensland and not asked to tour England with Australia, had made 96 - although he had batted for 15 fewer minutes. While Hussain's present run of good form continued, he was eclipsed by Law's wonderful stroke play on a day when rain claimed 45 overs.

It really was as though there was one rule for us and another for them. Law's confidence and assurance was only matched by Ricky Ponting at Headingley in the recent fourth Test.

Law's driving forms the basis of his game, but his cutting and pulling is no less effective and, if you bowl at his pads, it is at your peril. All this, after Leicestershire, who had lost the toss, had quickly removed the Essex openers.

Paul Prichard was caught

and bowled off one from Alan Mullally which lifted unexpectedly and at the same score, nine, Darren Robinson was well caught at third slip when he went after a wide one from David Millns.

After that, it was an endless succession of lovely strokes. Hussain is no slouch but he was content to let Law have his head, for trying to keep up with such a formidable player in this form only invites disaster.

Law's 100 took 147 balls and altogether he faced 162 balls for his 124 not out. He hit 15 fours and three sixes, one which flew into the main sponsors' marque.

Hussain has so far made 170 balls for his 52. Another point of interest came when the game was held up by the arrival of the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent's Labrador in the middle of the pitch.

Gloucestershire are resting three of their regular batsmen for today's four-day match with Pakistan A in Bristol. Matt Windows and Nick Trainor are given the chance to forge an opening partnership and Matt Church will bat at No 4.

Graveney runs rule as rain sets in again

ADAM SZRETER

reports from Worcester
Worcestershire 58-0
v Kent

The appearance of David Graveney, England's chairman of selectors, caused comfortably the biggest stir of another rain-ravaged day's cricket.

Before this match began Worcestershire had lost a staggering 1,254 overs to the weather in their eight Championship games, which means precisely one and a half day's kicking their heels during every match. Only 16 overs were possible yesterday, in the hour immediately before lunch, after which a steady drizzle set in for the afternoon and by the time it had

stopped the light was no longer up to it. Tom Moody and Tim Curtis dealt with everything that Dean Headley, Alan Igglesden and Paul Strang had to offer, racing to 47 off the first 10 overs. Curtis brought the 50 up with a beautiful square drive off Strang, whose first over went for 10 - but that was that as far as the play was concerned.

Graveney's presence was first believed to be connected to that of Graeme Hick, although the official explanation was that he was there to run the rule over Kent's Headley and Mark Ealham. But if Graveney is here again today, and Hick clatters Headley and Ealham all over New Road, who knows what might happen at tomorrow's selection meeting?

Moles suffers curse of being captain

MIKE CAREY

reports from Edgbaston
Warwickshire 50-0 v Sussex

Only 16 overs were possible on a grey day here yesterday - but that was long enough for Warwickshire to increase their casualty list this season when their opener Andy Moles was obliged to retire after breaking the little finger of his left hand.

Batsmen up and down the

country will probably exchange knowing looks at this news, bearing in mind Edgbaston's recent record, so it should be stressed that Moles was unlucky enough to encounter the wrong ball that bounced erratically as he played forward to Vasebert Drakes.

It had taken Drakes sometime to locate a full length - coming fresh from a very flat pitch at Derby he probably got over excited at seeing the new ball bounce generously - and Moles had not ventured much when he

met a delivery that leapt at him and pinned his hand to the bat handle.

Moles joins two other Warwickshire captains, Tim Munton and Nick Knight on the sidelines. It is not yet clear how complicated the break is, but Moles is expected to be out of action for at least a fortnight; but, no matter what the medical advice is, Warwickshire's NatWest Trophy semi-final against Sussex here on 13 August will loom large in his thoughts.

Before Moles' mishap, Mark Wagh, playing his third championship match, had commended himself with some good looking strokes, notably a straight drive for four off the back foot which is usually a hint of latent talent.

Both openers were no doubt hoping to make the most of what the pitch offered once they had survived the new ball but the weather turned it into one of those miserable days.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship

First day of four, 11.0 today

Derbyshire v Durham

Chester-le-Street: Durham (4pts), with four first-class wickets standing, are 245 runs behind Derbyshire (9).

Derbyshire won toss.

Derbyshire - First innings

A S Rollins c Morris b Wood 12

M R May b Wood 10

J Adams c Wood b Brown 4

K J Barnett c Spanght b Foster 23

M J Marshall b Brown 47

V P Charles b Brown 1

TK M McKinnon b Spanght b Bots 1

PA A J DeSilva b Bots 1

A J Harris b Bots 1

K J Dean not out 1

D E Malcom not out 23

Extras (bbs, nb) 2

Total (for 6, 34 overs) 254

Derbyshire (bbs, nb) 2

Total (for 6, 34 overs) 254

Bowling: Brown 20.1-2-33-4; Wood 4.1-7-2-2; Bots 10.0-48-2; Foster 7.0-42-1; Spanght 3.0-20-0.

Derbyshire - First innings

J J Lewis b DeSilva 36

S Harrison b Harris 1

J E Morris b McKinnon 1

N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

J J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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Essex v Leicestershire

Colchester: Essex (2pts) have scored 204 for 2 in their first innings against Leicestershire (0).

Essex won toss.

Essex - First innings

P J Prichard c and b Mulally 2

D J Robinson c Pearson b Millns 4

N Hussain not out 52

S G Law not out 124

Extras (bbs, nb) 17

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Leicestershire (bbs, nb) 1

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Bowling: Brown 20.1-2-33-4; Wood 4.1-7-2-2; Bots 10.0-48-2; Foster 7.0-42-1; Spanght 3.0-20-0.

Leicestershire - First innings

J J Lewis b DeSilva 36

S Harrison b Harris 1

J E Morris b McKinnon 1

N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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Warwickshire v Sussex

Warwickshire won toss.

Warwickshire - First innings

PA A J DeSilva b Bots 1

A J Harris b Bots 1

K J Dean not out 1

D E Malcom not out 23

Extras (bbs, nb) 2

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Sussex (bbs, nb) 1

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Bowling: Brown 20.1-2-33-4; Wood 4.1-7-2-2; Bots 10.0-48-2; Foster 7.0-42-1; Spanght 3.0-20-0.

Sussex - First innings

J J Lewis b DeSilva 36

S Harrison b Harris 1

J E Morris b McKinnon 1

N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

J J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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Worcestershire v Kent

Worcestershire won toss.

Worcestershire - First innings

PA A J DeSilva b Bots 1

A J Harris b Bots 1

K J Dean not out 1

D E Malcom not out 23

Extras (bbs, nb) 2

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Kent (bbs, nb) 1

Total (for 2, 39 overs) 204

Bowling: Brown 20.1-2-33-4; Wood 4.1-7-2-2; Bots 10.0-48-2; Foster 7.0-42-1; Spanght 3.0-20-0.

Kent - First innings

J J Lewis b DeSilva 36

S Harrison b Harris 1

J E Morris b McKinnon 1

N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

J J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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N J Sparks b McKinnon 1

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British angered by IAAF cut in drug ban

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
reports from Athens

Linford Christie led British protests here yesterday as the ban for serious doping offences in athletics was reduced from four to two years.

"We are going backwards all of a sudden," the former British team captain said. "I think it leaves it open to people to take drugs. We should have gone forward to eight years or even a life ban."

"If we are going to eradicate doping the deterrent has to be

strong. This is not strong enough."

The change in the rule, confirmed at the International Amateur Athletic Federation's Congress ahead of the World Championships, follows a series of costly legal battles in which athletes have invoked civil law to contest the length of their bans.

In countries such as Germany, Russia and Spain, restraint of trade legislation regards a ban of two years, rather than four, as an appropriate punishment.

In March of this year, two German athletes - Martin

Brehmer and Susan Tiedke-Greene - successfully applied for reinstatement half-way through four-year suspensions. Tiedke-Greene is due to compete in the World Championships starting tomorrow in the long-jump.

Two years ago, an emotional appeal by the British Athletic Federation's executive chairman, Peter Radford, swayed the IAAF Congress from changing the four-year rule which has been in place since 1991.

Alan Warner, Britain's delegate at yesterday's congress debate, also argued fiercely against the reduction, but the

new measure was carried by a 112-56 majority.

"Alan made a magnificent speech, but the minds were already made up," said Mary Peters, Britain's former Olympic champion and BAF president.

"The tail is being allowed to wag the dog," Warner said. "Only 10 or a dozen nations are affected and we have 200 IAAF members. It is a bad and a sad day for the sport."

An IAAF spokesman confirmed that athletes who have served more than half of a four-year ban would be free to seek immediate reinstatement. That will be good news for

Paul Edwards, the British shot-putter who failed to overturn his four-year ban in court earlier this month.

The IAAF ruling that two years should be the minimum ban leaves open the possibility that national federations could suspend their athletes for longer if they chose.

Christie is all for this. "Britain should stay with the longer ban," he said. "Someone has to take a stand. The majority of our athletes are drug-free and we should be able to prove it to the rest of the world."

Warner is inclined to concur with the two-year rule. "I think

it would be grossly unfair on our athletes to hold them to four years when others are serving two, but the question has to be decided by the BAF Council."

Christie's reaction was instinctive and admirable. But the practical difficulties facing the IAAF in the face of national legislation are extremely awkward. It is the responsibility of national federations to contest civil claims by their athletes, and in most cases they cannot afford it. The BAF itself is currently facing a £1m lawsuit for damages from Diane Modahl following her successful appeal against a four-year doping ban.

For all that, the way in which the IAAF decision was passed on to the waiting world yesterday was little short of contemptuous as the IAAF president, Primo Nebiolo, attempted to skirt round the issue before providing a couple of grudging replies to questions.

By the time discussion moved on to the IAAF's alteration of punishments following detection of illegal stimulants in athletes' urine, the sport's autocrat wearied of the whole business.

"We have a problem with stimulants and we have reached an agreement," Nebiolo said,

"But I regret to tell you I do not remember."

"I'm tired of discussing the problem of doping. I like these great events, these championships with their young people. Spending so much time following the pee-pee - for me it is not nice. I believe the general secretary, who loves the pee-pee better than myself, can inform you."

Thus requested, the general secretary confirmed that the three-month ban for illegal use of stimulants had been abolished. Those found guilty of infringements in future would receive a public warning.

Ferrari extend Irvine's contract

Motor racing
JON WILDE

Eddie Irvine will spend a third season with Ferrari after the Italian Formula One team yesterday decided to take up their option on the Ulsterman's services for 1998.

Irvine's future had been in doubt, even though he is enjoying his best season on the circuit, with four podium finishes that included a second place in the Argentinian Grand Prix.

Speculation came to a head last weekend when the 31-year-old's German Grand Prix finished on the opening lap at Hockenheim with the back of his car in flames following a collision with the Williams of Heinz-Harald Frentzen.

However, a brief statement from the Maranello-based constructors confirmed that Irvine - who has partnered Michael Schumacher since switching from Jordan - will retain his place in the team.

"Ferrari announce that they have exercised the existing option with Eddie Irvine in respect of the 1998 season," the statement said.

"It's the best situation for me to stay with Ferrari, as Michael and I have similar ways of driving and setting up the car," Irvine said. "I'm happy to stay with the team and maybe now we can forget about next season and concentrate on winning the world championship."

Irvine spent two seasons with Jordan before joining Ferrari and finished third in his first race for the team at Melbourne. But that proved to be Irvine's only podium finish of 1996 as Ferrari struggled with reliability problems, and doubts were raised over his future.

However, the decision to keep faith has been repaid this year, with Irvine lying sixth in the championship.



The New Zealand big boat, Numbers (left), leads the Americans aboard Jameson in the first race of the Admiral's Cup on the Solent yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Out of the confusion of a heavy collision, some gear damage, some disastrous wrong turns and a welter of protests for the jury, the shining bonus for the British three-boat team on the first day of the Champagne Mumm Admiral's Cup was a second place for Graham Walker's 45-foot Corum Indulgence in both races, writes Stuart Alexander from the Solent.

The day opened grey and wet for the 21 yachts representing seven countries and turned blacker for a couple of them as the pressure took its toll. Worst

Indulgence find gratification on dark day of mishaps

hit were the young team on Britain's Mumm 36, Bradamante. Having scored a second in the first race, they were leading the second into the last turning mark, but went round it the wrong way.

The rest of the fleet followed and then found they were not given a finish when they went through the line. Off back to Cowes they went disconsolate, all except Italy's

Breeze, with Tommaso Chieffi and Eddie Warden Owen on board.

They went back and finished the course again and were awarded a win, having been last, while all the others scored a seventh for not finishing. The others immediately prepared to protest because Breeze had won the first Mumm 36 race, now rather important to the defending Italian team.

The hardest hit were the crew of the big boat, Madina, which after going round the West Lepe Buoy in the west Solent had the cable, which turns their rudder, snap. The 49-foot yacht rounded up, tacked and headed back not just into the buoy but straight into the approaching Australian 50-footer, Syd Fischer's Ragamuffin. The two collided, ripping out Ragamuffin's bow pulpit, damaging

stanchions and lifelines and creating the carbon fibre hull. None of the crew, all sitting with their legs over the side, was hurt either by the collision or the boom scything over their yacht at head level.

Madina also had damage to the hull, but none to the crew, and Rod Davis, the skipper, said: "It may be a late night, but we will be there tomorrow for the Channel race, we will be sailing."

The Italians also needed the break as their 40-footer, Brava, previously twice world champion, saw her old dominance cruelly pushed aside by the most impressively powerful boat on the course, the German Willi Illbruck's Pinta, guided by the American, John Kosteki.

He scored two firsts and the triple Olympic gold medalist, Jochen Schumann, steered the big boat, Rubin, to victory in the

first race provisionally to give Germany a morale-boosting filip of leading overall.

Britain, also suffering as their 40-footer, Easy Oars, fell to last after hitting a mark in the first race and needing overnight repair, were third equal with Italy.

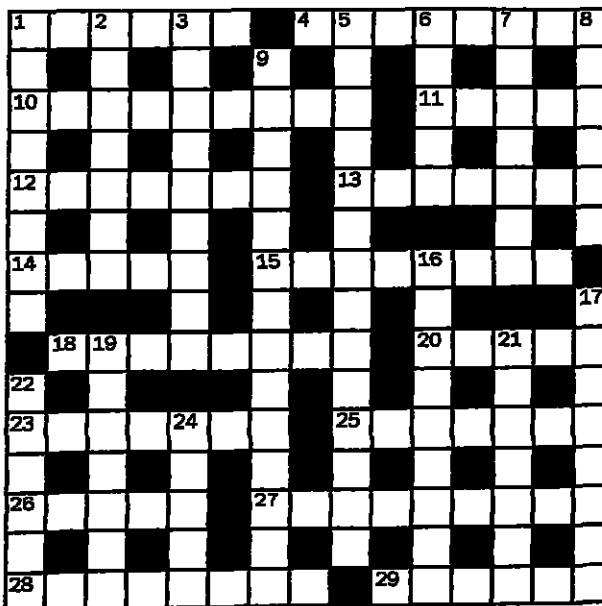
However, with the New Zealanders only fifth equal with Australia and their 40-footer facing a protest from Easy Oars, and the United States second, everything is still open going into today's 200-mile Channel race.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

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By Phil

Thursday's solution



ALMANAC GLAPPED
PAUO AUUR
RAYED UNBENDING
LEGATIVES
COLLEAGUE SPELL
O O E A
TOWER TABULATOR
E E T A L R
PERMANENT YEARS
L E R U L
UNDEP POLYNESIA
M A U L E O P M
BARRAGUDA BROOM
E K R G M L R E
RESIDES ERECTOR

2 Failed to win, though potting black and with a little hesitation, pink (7)
3 Manipulator's work - getting into hot seat somehow (9)
5 It'll mince race up badly, nothing less (9,5)
6 Pub? See visit curtailed (5)
7 Folded paper? I'm a type of cheque when turned over (7)
8 The Parisian's apprehended in disturbance in Spanish city (6)
9 Following a trend, group is into staying sober (2,3,9)
16 Divorced editor swallow-ling rum (9)
17 Centre of government involving Right and Left in public transport (8)
19 Leave to travel round US state - not surrounding area (7)
21 European Community getting involved in grain supply is affecting Mediterranean member (7)
22 Improper, we hear, to follow most of the crowd (6)
24 Covering top of head when diving into rising river (5)

ACROSS
1 Most of autumn's taken to study bird (6)
4 Make clear witchcraft's not allowed (5,3)
10 Money owed on bet about upper-class girl in Society? (9)
11 Beginning to climb mound in freezing conditions (5)
12 Biblical community against love and Church (7)
13 Composer upset by hail and mud (7)
14 Entrances a Test, striking 50 (5)
15 Swimmer curtailed jerky movement, suddenly becoming ordinary (8)
18 Repairman possibly mad about energy and central heating (8)

DOWN
20 Row about good opponent with considerable skill (5)
23 Collection of teeth noticed by journalist (7)
25 Independent purchasers, presumably academic types (7)
26 In formal surroundings, speak nothing rank (5)
27 Explosive opening to gg - ie tangle with excitement (9)
28 Scotsman's crying "Hello!" (8)
29 Handsome man providing excitement and lust, say, on reflection (6)

1 Core of team means to follow vogue that's come to nothing (4,4)

Newcastle stop Beardsley move

Football
ALAN NIXON

Newcastle United have blocked Peter Beardsley's move to Bolton Wanderers because the England veteran is needed at St James' Park.

Kenny Dalglish, Newcastle's manager, has stopped the £500,000 transfer to the Premier League newcomers after losing Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand and failing to sign a replacement striker to play in their qualifying matches for the Champions' League, against Croatia Zagreb, this month.

It is a surprise change of fortune for Beardsley. He was reluctant to move but he had been told by Dalglish that his first-team chances were limited and

was given permission to talk Bolton manager, Colin Todd.

However, Newcastle has already started scouting for the future and watched Ibrahim Bakayoko, a £4m-rated Ivory Coast striker, play for the French club Montpellier in an Inter-Toto Cup tie on Wednesday. Manchester United, Liverpool and Manchester City are also interested in the player.

United have abandoned their attempt to sign Celso Silva because he has been refused a work permit. United's manager, Alex Ferguson, thought two weeks ago he had pulled off the £3.5m signing of the defender from the Brazilian club, Corinthians, but now he has accepted he must give up on the 29-year-old, who has played six times for Brazil.

Attilio Lombardo's move to Crystal Palace is back on again, a week after it looked to be dead. Transfer talks collapsed last week over the 31-year-old Juventus winger's wage demands, but Palace's manager, Steve Coppell, said there was a misunderstanding over net and gross pay.

The referee who sent off two Arsenal players during the friendly match away to PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday, said the players had given him no alternative. "But if I had known how it was going to end I would have blown for time a minute earlier. It was only a friendly after all," he said yesterday.

Jan Wegereef sent off Patrick Vieira for kneeing a PSV player in the last minute, and moments later dismissed the

teenager Matthew Upson for "serious foul play". He did not realise he could be putting two of Arsene Wenger's players out of the Premiership for three games. "In Holland you will only get suspensions for friendly matches if you are cautioned or red-carded in a friendly," he said.

Fifa yesterday deferred setting a transfer fee for Ronaldo until September. "Inter Milan's offer and Barcelona's idea were too far apart, so Fifa decided not to make a proposal," a Fifa spokesman said. The matter will be left to a special committee in early September.

Norwich City have signed the 24-year-old Spanish defender Victor Segura from Lleida, the Spanish Second Division side, on a free transfer.

West Ham forge link with Southend

Southend and West Ham are following the example set by Liverpool and Crewe by forging a "special relationship".

Last season Crewe announced an agreement with Liverpool that eventually saw Danny Murphy move to Anfield for £1.5m. Liverpool also got first option on Gresty Road's young players, and that scenario may be repeated in the south-east, though the only initial manifestation will be West Ham playing their reserve fixtures at Roots Hall.

Season ticket holders from both clubs will be given free admission to West Ham's reserve games, with Southend recognising that many fans in Essex follow both clubs.

The move follows the appointment of the former Ham-

mers defender Alvin Martin as manager at Roots Hall this summer, after Ronnie Whelan left the club following relegation to the Second Division.

West Ham's managing director Peter Storrle said: "It's a relationship we see of being equal benefit to both clubs along the lines of that which exists between, for example, Liverpool and Crewe and which has worked to the advantage of both."

The Premier League will not be rushed into making public the long-awaited findings of their inquiry into so-called "bungs". The Sports Minister, Tony Banks, had told the authorities to hurry up and publish the details of investigations into inducements paid during transfer deals, saying, "The new season starts next week and I still haven't seen the report."

The findings are unlikely to be published before the new season kicks off, however. A spokesman for the Premier League said yesterday: "It is a full and thorough inquiry that's still ongoing and we hope to report in full as soon as possible."

The Football Association has launched a national survey to improve their understanding of injuries. They are concerned by long-term injuries to some of the game's leading players and will gather information from club physiotherapists over the next 18 months.

They will log every injury and record details of the circumstances in which it occurred. We want to know how and where certain injuries happen and how they have been treated."

Eric Cantona, Diego Maradona and George Weah are to tackle racism in an all-star tournament this autumn. The trio will captain three teams at the event, which is being backed by the European Commission to publicise the European Year Against Racism. The international players' union, the AIFP, is organising the event, which will be held in Spain on 12 October. Each match will last 40 minutes.

Southampton's manager Dave Jones is raiding his old club Stockport County for a third time to sign their captain Mike Flynn for a fee of around £1m.

Underwood signs up for Bedford

Rugby Union

Rory Underwood has joined Bedford's campaign to gain promotion from the Second Division - only four days after ending his long career at Leicester with a testimonial.

The 34-year-old wing, who is England's most capped player with 85 appearances, has decided to team up again with his former England and Lion manager, Geoff Cooke, who is now chief executive at Bedford.

Cooke said: "Rory has secured his place in English rugby history as the greatest wing three-quarter. Bringing a player of his experience here is a great bonus to the club."

Bedford also announced the signing of Alistair Murdoch, an Australian with Scottish parents who plays either centre or wing.

David Hinkins, a prop forward from Bristol; the Bridgend flanker Jason Forster; and centre Nick Smith, from Gloucester.

Llanelli have named the Welsh international Nigel Davies as their assistant coach to work with their director of coaching, Gareth Jenkins.

Doddie Weir said yesterday he was very pleased with his progress after resuming training with Newcastle, having recovered from the injury which many feared would cost him his career. The Scotland and British Lions lock said: "I'm hoping to be fit for the opening league game of the season on 23 August - that's the target and if my rehabilitation goes to plan there's no reason to doubt that."

سكرا من الاصل